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Near East & South Asia

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Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

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Inter-Arab Affairs

Inter-Arab Affairs: Somalia Requests Arab Meeting To Discuss Ethiopian Attacks

NC1208143496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1340 GMT 12 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 12 Aug (MENA)—Somalia has requested an urgent meeting of the Arab League Council to discuss the recent Ethiopian aggressions against Somalia's Ogaden region. Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid received the request today during his meeting with 'Abdallah Hasan, Somalia's delegate to the Arab League.

Speaking after the meeting, Hasan said he had briefed the secretary general on the Ethiopian aggression against Somalia. He denied that the Somali Islamic Union Party [Hizb al-Ittihad al-Islami al-Sumali] is sheltering terrorist elements at camps along the borders with Ethiopia. He hoped that the Somali factions will fully reconcile and set up a transitional Somali government so that the country can emerge from its current crisis. Ambassador Hasan praised the Arab League's stances calling for Somalia's unity and territorial integrity.

Inter-Arab Affairs: Paper Views International Terrorism

MM1308085896 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 10 Aug 96 p 15

[Article by 'Abd-al-Wahhab Badrakhan: "The Year of Terrorism"]

[FBIS Translated Text] This year has gone a long way toward establishing itself as the "Year of Terrorism." This year, the only world superpower was no longer immune from the actions of a terrorism with which it was familiar and a terrorism which it still did not know. There has clearly been a development in the way terrorists are perceived. They are no longer just shadowy brutal extremists. They may also be Internet users who neither belong to any specific state nor are financed by any specific state. The world might have to recognize that a new "internationale" of terrorism is emerging from a defunct "international" rubble, where drug traffickers mix with the various Mafias and those with hopeless or worthy causes.

In any case, no matter how violent its actions and how murderous and destructive its operations are, terrorism will not prevail over the state, because it does not provide a plan for those whom it is supposed to defend. However, it does carry a message and clues. Although it is not necessary to pay any attention to its content or abide by its conditions, it would nevertheless be unwise to disregard it and shove it aside as though it did not exist. The security organs should, or rather have a duty and a right to, study what happens in order to take appropriate action enabling them to foresee any action, to contain and isolate the terrorists, and to put them somewhere where they can do no harm. However, political institutions should also focus on the symptoms, origins, and reasons of terrorist action, because this could guide them to what they do not know or what they are trying to ignore.

Just as major policies do not originate from nothing, the international community must recognize at some point that extremism and terrorism also do not originate from nothing. The superpowers' mistake is that they refuse to recognize the negative impact of their policies, and refuse also to recognize the reactions to these policies. That is why they continue to implement the equation of power and weakness, where both moderates and extremists are treated equally. They exert pressure at random, make everyone face an impossible task, and embarrass them in front of their peoples and societies.

The Arab region has suffered and is still suffering from terrorism and its consequences. Israel's state terrorism almost enjoys an international legitimacy cover, since it always has the blessing of the United States which, should terrorism strike at Israel, would jump to its feet, mobilize all its forces, and exert all kinds of pressure, and if it is no longer enough that all states would express their condemnation, it would also create international meetings to condole with Israel. Just as the peace process and its rules were imposed by force on the Arabs in order to satisfy Israel, they were also always prevented from expressing their views on terrorism and instead always found themselves being accused. When the Palestinians were still carrying out armed resistance, this was considered terrorism. After a peace agreement was signed with the Palestinians, Arab society as a whole was branded with the stigma of terrorism, and for even wider generalization, terrorism became known as "Islamic" terrorism.

Some days ago, the group of seven industrialized states, plus Russia, held an antiterrorism conference. At the same time, representatives of 16 Arab states were meeting in Cairo for the same purpose. It is clear that a remedy would still require the security organs. What is certain is that tightening security could achieve reasonable or adequate success in eliminating terrorism. However, regardless of the terrorists' rhetoric, some thought should be given to organizing conferences aimed at providing preventive policies which would preempt the outbreak of terrorism and terrorist operations. The fight [against terrorism] should start by finding a remedy for the causes, the environment, and the issues in which violence and extremism develop. If the small states are incapable of doing this, the superpowers should make it an integral part of their antiterrorist agenda.

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Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Notes 'New Violation' of Peace Accords

JN1308103096 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0900 GMT 13 Aug 96

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun from Gaza]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat said the Israeli decision to set up 300 mobile housing units in Jewish settlements in the West Bank is a new violation of what was agreed on and signed. Ahmad 'Abd-al-Rahman, secretary general of the Council of Ministers, said the Israeli violations threaten the peace process. Commenting on the Israeli decision to set up 300 housing units, 'Abd-al-Rahman said: This is sabotage of the peace process and is meant to destroy it. The secretary general of the Council of Ministers told the Voice of Palestine that Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu is required to stop these methods that seek to destroy the peace process, instead of making statements to Palestinian television and press. 'Abd-al-Rahman said peace in the region is in need of the Palestinian people.

The Israeli defense minister yesterday approved setting up 300 housing units in Jewish settlements in the West Bank.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Aide Rules Out Resuming Talks Soon

MM1208142196 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 10 Aug 96 p 3

[Report on telephone interview with Nabil Abu-Rudaynah, Palestinian President 'Arafat's press spokesman, by 'Ali al-Salih in London; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] One of Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat's aides has refused the Israeli linkage between the cessation of Palestinian activities in East Jerusalem and the progress of the negotiated peace. In a telephone interview with AL- SHARQ AL-AWSAT, 'Arafat's press spokesman Nabil Abu-Rudaynah discounted the possibility of the resumption of the final stage negotiations soon, because of the current differences within the ranks of the Israeli Government. He said that the Palestinian Authority is pursuing what he called a "no-rush policy."

'Arafat's adviser expressed his satisfaction with the Arab and international stances in support of the Palestinian position on the question of negotiations, referring in this context to the talks he will be having this morning with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak in Alexandria prior to his participation later in the Fatah Central Committee meeting in Cairo, the first such meeting the Fatah Central Committee has held since March 1995.

Referring to Israel's linkage between the questions of Palestinian activities in Jerusalem and the progress of the negotiations, Abu-Rudaynah said: "We and the Israelis are bound by a signed agreement in which the discussion of the Jerusalem issue was deferred until the final stage of the negotiations."

He added: "Furthermore, there is also the American memorandum of guarantees which formed the basis on which we participated in the Madrid peace conference, as well as the Israeli Foreign Ministry's letter to the PLO affirming that no changes would be made to the demographic character of Jerusalem during the negotiations.

"In short, the Israelis are trying by their statements to create a problem. But they have no right to talk about this matter because that would constitute a departure from the signed agreement and will lead in the end to the collapse of the peace process."

Abu-Rudaynah was speaking in response to statements reported to have been made during an Israeli cabinet meeting by Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, who was quoted as saying: "We cannot proceed with the negotiations with the Palestinian Authority as long as violations continue to take place in Jerusalem."

The Likud party, which is headed by Netanyahu, has stated that some of the activities taking place in the unofficial PLO headquarters in East Jerusalem are in fact part of the activities of the Palestinian Authority, adding that the provisional peace accords that were concluded with the PLO and which provided for Palestinian autonomous rule in some parts of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip confined the activities of the Palestinian Authority to the autonomous rule areas.

Hatim 'Abd-al-Qadir, member of the Palestinian Legislative Council for the Jerusalem constituency, sparked a problem and a conflict with the Israelis when he declared toward the end of last month the opening of an office in Jerusalem where he would receive members of his electoral constituency and discuss their problems. Israel thereupon threatened to close down the office and issued an order to this effect. But in the end it found itself faced with legal complications, particularly since the aforementioned office was situated in the house of deputy 'Abd-al-Qadir. Finally, the two sides reached a compromise and the problem was defused by deputy 'Abd-al-Qadir's declaration that the office does not carry out any Palestinian Authority activity.

Abu-Rudaynah says that "the inhabitants of East Jerusalem participated in the elections by nominating

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candidates and by voting on the basis of an agreement reached between us and the Israelis. Jerusalem is represented by seven deputies in the Legislative Council." He added: "This agreement which led to the acceptance of East Jerusalem as a constituency in the Palestinian elections implicitly establishes that Jerusalem is a Palestinian territory." "Otherwise, is there any deputy in any parliament in the world who belongs to one country and lives in the land of another country?" he asked.

'Arafat's adviser reiterated that "any departure from these agreements constitutes a departure from the peace process and threatens its continuity."

Asked about the feasibility of the resumption of negotiations on the Palestinian track, Abu-Rudaynah said that he discounts the possibility of their resumption soon, attributing this to what he called differences and problems within the Israeli Government. He referred in this context to the resignation of Israeli Justice Minister Ya'aqov Ne'eman after having been accused of corruption and also to Foreign Minister David Levi's failure to attend yesterday's cabinet meeting because of differences between him and the prime minister over powers and responsibilities.

Abu-Rudaynah said: "Levi had promised President 'Arafat during their meeting in Gaza that he would be submitting the names of [the Israeli] members of the negotiating committees to the Palestinian side and also that a higher negotiations committee would be formed. But so far we have not received the names of these committees' members," he said, "nor has the higher committee been formed because of Levi's differences with Netanyahu about who is to chair that committee."

Abu-Rudaynah said that "Netanyahu wants the formation of a four- member higher negotiations committee to be headed by him, but Levi wants to head the committee himself. In short, the Israeli Government is unable to organize its own internal affairs."

With regard to the Mubarak-'Arafat summit meeting, Abu-Rudaynah said: "The talks during the meeting will center on the results of the talks the two leaders have had recently. For his part, President Mubarak will brief President 'Arafat on the results of his visit to Washington and his talks with Netanyahu, and also his talks with the Syrian president in Alexandria and his talks with the custodian of the two holy mosques [King Fahd] in Jeddah. 'Arafat, for his part, will brief President Mubarak on the results of his talks at Aqaba and will convey to him the Palestinian fears over the Israeli decision to lift the ban in regard to settlement activities."

Speaking about the Fatah Central Committee meeting, Abu-Rudaynah said: "The importance of this meeting lies in the fact that it is the first meeting the Central Committee has held with all its members attending for about 18 months. The committee's agenda consists of two basic issues: first, to evaluate the internal conditions of the Fatah Movement in the light of developments, and second, to carry out a comprehensive general evaluation of the peace process following the changes that have taken place in the Israeli political arena."

Palestinian Affairs: VOP on Resuming Meetings With Israel; al-Tarifi Comments

JN1308054696 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0500 GMT 13 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli-Palestinian civil affairs committee will hold a meeting tomorrow after a five-month gap and for the first time since the Israeli right wing under Binyamin Netanyahu assumed power in Israel. The Palestinian side is led by Lawyer Jamil al-Tarifi, minister of civil affairs, and the Israeli side will be led by Oren Shahor, occupation activity coordinator.

Another meeting is scheduled to be held 15 August to discuss the Gaza airport issue.

Minister al-Tarifi told our radio that we must wait to see how serious the Israeli side is, noting that these meetings will demonstrate if Israel cares to make progress and if these meetings are intended for public opinion [as heard].

Palestinian Affairs: Al-Tarifi Interviewed on Meeting With Shahor

JN1308090096 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0410 GMT 13 Aug 96

[Telephone interview with Jamil al-Tarifi, minister of civil affairs in the Palestinian Authority, by Za'al Abu-Rukbah in Jericho; from the "A New Day" feature—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Abu-Rukbah] Good morning, Brother Jamil.

[Al-Tarifi] Good morning.

[Abu-Rukbah] You have said that you will be meeting with Oren Shahor, the Israeli coordinator, tomorrow. The meeting is long overdue.

[Al-Tarifi] In fact, that statement came from the Israeli side. It is true that we will hold a working meeting tomorrow, but will it be a serious, fruitful working meeting, given that there have been no working meetings in the full sense of the term since February? After this six-month gap, will these meetings be fruitful, or will they

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be intended for local consumption or to convince public opinion that Palestinian-Israeli meetings are being held?

Another meeting will be held on 15 August to discuss the issue of the Gaza airport. I have sent more than four letters to the Israeli side asking them to return to the negotiating table to thrash out the airport issue, but to no avail. Therefore, we must wait to see the results before talking about the meeting's topics.

[Abu-Rukbah] Are you going to deal with the same officials, the same crews, that you dealt with during the Peres days, or have they been changed?

[Al-Tarifi] there has been no change on the level of civil affairs and on implementing the civilian part [of the agreements], given that the head of the Israeli side is a major general — a military officer. The politicians have all been replaced. Foreign Ministry officials have been replaced.

[Abu-Rukbah] This means that you will face a hardline attitude from the Israeli side. The new negotiators will be carrying stiff instructions from the hardline Netanyahu.

[Al-Tarifi] The Israeli negotiators are now saying that they are ready to implement agreements. Let us wait and see. So far, I am not optimistic about the results of these meetings. Nevertheless, let us wait and see.

[Abu-Rukbah] It is true that they say that they have come to negotiate and implement agreements. However, since Netanyahu assumed power, and indeed before that, actual facts demonstrate the contrary. They declare one thing and practice something else. As Palestinians, how will you face the situation, both vis-s-vis the Israeli negotiator and the Palestinian public?

[Al-Tarifi] First we must be transparent to the Palestinian citizen. We must not deceive this citizen into believing that serious negotiations are being held and so on and so forth. The Palestinian citizens should know the facts as they are. For instance, I cannot tell the Palestinian citizen that everything is all right when the settlements are being expanded daily before his very eyes and when homes are being destroyed as he watches. As far as negotiations are concerned, we must adhere to discussing signed agreements without any deviation. We must be patient with this Israeli arrogance, which really began even before Netanyahu assumed power.

[Abu-Rukbah] But this stand robs you of the Palestinian people's confidence. While the Palestinian side is adhering to agreements, the Israeli side is changing facts on the ground.

[Al-Tarifi] That is true, but eventually our people will realize everything and know that we have no other aim but to save what remains of this homeland from the clutches of the occupation.

[Abu-Rukbah] There are minor but nevertheless important problems, dealing with the daily life of Palestinians, such as permits, detainees, and other issues. Do you discuss these issues with the Israeli side or do you discuss only political issues?

[Al-Tarifi] All issues are discussed. As you know, they talk about easing the closure of the West Bank and Gaza. I have said many times that these statements were incorrect and that we have not felt any easing. When there is an easing, we are informed of its kind and nature. Therefore, we present everything and all issues of interest to the Palestinian people during negotiations.

[Abu-Rukbah] There is another issue that can be dealt with on reciprocal basis: the issue of the Palestinian reporters who do not enjoy the facilities granted to the Israeli reporters in our areas. The Israeli reporter in our areas comes in full freedom, but the Palestinian reporters cannot reach the Israeli areas. Can the issue of reciprocity be raised in such a case?

[Al-Tarifi] It is possible to deal with this matter on a reciprocal basis, but as you are aware, the issue is not a [words indistinct] our students from the Gaza Strip who attend the Palestinian universities in the West Bank. This is another chronic issue. There are many problems, such as college teachers, doctors in hospitals. There are many outstanding issues on this level.

[Abu-Rukbah] Are you preparing a meeting at the summit level between Brother Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] and senior Israeli officials?

[Al-Tarifi] There is talk about a meeting between the president and the Israeli defense minister soon. We hope it will take place and will be fruitful.

[Abu-Rukbah] We hope so, and we hope to have another interview with you after you have met with Shahor in order to tell the Palestinian citizens what was achieved in this meeting, which you said will be the first. We wish you luck and good morning.

[Al-Tarifi] Good morning to you.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Senior' PA Officials Blast Netanyahu, Gold

TA1008132396 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0700 GMT 10 Aug 96

[Report by correspondents Udi Segal and Gay Benyovitz from Gaza; italicized passages in English]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A large delegation of Israeli correspondents is visiting Gaza for the first time this

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weekend. The correspondents were invited by the International Peace Center for a tour of the Palestinian Authority [PA] areas. The Israeli correspondents are holding meetings with senior PA officials, but not Yasir 'Arafat himself, who has left for a meeting with Husni Mubarak in Egypt. Among the correspondents are IDF Radio's Gay Benyovitz and Udi Segal. The latter heard a sharp attack leveled against Binyamin Netanyahu and Dore Gold by Hasan 'Asfur, the coordinator of political negotiations on behalf of the PA.

[Begin recording] [Segal] Since the elections in Israel the negotiations with the PA have been frozen. Senior PA officials say that as far as they are concerned the political process has stopped. The PA officials say they are waiting for Netanyahu to continue with the process, as he has promised to do. The Gaza officials are referring not merely to the agreement, which they claim Israel is failing to implement, but also to the spirit of the agreement, the general direction of things. They say this spirit is essentially evil, and this is the basis for Hasan 'Asfur's unprecedented attack. In an interview with IDF Radio, 'Asfur criticizes Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu as someone who does not understand the Palestinians, the region, or even the Israelis — seeing that he has lived in America.

['Asfur] *I think that Mr. Bibi doesn't know the area and doesn't know the people; not only the Palestinians... [words indistinct] I believe that he also doesn't know the Israeli people.*

[Segal] Binyamin Netanyahu does not realize he is the prime minister of Israel. He believes he is the head of the Likud opposition party. Netanyahu does not understand the area, he does not understand the Palestinians, and he even fails to understand the Israelis — otherwise he would have understood that it is an Israeli interest to implement the agreement between the two peoples without one side trying to be lord over the other side.

'Asfur continued the personal attack by referring to newspaper reports on the prime minister. He also criticized him on his past.

['Asfur] *We need the prime minister to live in the area, not in America. We need the prime minister to understand the people, the mentality of the people there, not only the mentality of the American people or the Jewish Americans inside the states.*

[Segal, translates the above and continues] Netanyahu should learn how to be a prime minister in a region of peace rather than of war. 'Asfur did not limit his attack to the prime minister. He also did not spare Dr. Dore Gold, the prime minister's political adviser — the genius Dr. Gold, as he called him derisively.

['Asfur] *When you meet a person like Dore and he looks for the Palestinians as enemies I don't think that he is a good person to see that there is a peace process. He still looks for the Palestinians like before the peace process. For that I don't see that he is the suitable person to contact with the Palestinians. Maybe he is a good person to do lectures.*

[Segal, translates the above and continues] The Palestinians are rejecting any proposal to reopen the agreement regarding Hebron. Muhammad Dahlan, head of the Palestinian Preventive Security Service in the Gaza Strip, says there is no room for compromise on this issue. He says there is an agreed-upon map and there is no reason to change this.

Referring to the Israeli demands to close down institutions in East Jerusalem and the violations of the agreements, Hasan 'Asfur says that sometimes it sounds like a joke coming out of the prime minister's mouth.

['Asfur] *I think it's a joke sometimes when Bibi speaks about the Palestinian violations, because maybe he doesn't know the agreement itself, and I think maybe he needs time to read and also understand the agreement itself, and after that he can speak about the violations and he can compare.*

[Segal, translates the above and continues] 'Asfur says that perhaps the prime minister needs somebody to teach him the agreement. 'Asfur added: We call on the prime minister to discuss the mutual violations of the agreement. To speak about it with the correspondents is simply not good enough.

This personal attack of Hasan 'Asfur together with the sharp criticism leveled at Netanyahu by Muhammad Dahlan — who said, for example, that the Palestinians spend their nights dreaming about Netanyahu coming to meet 'Arafat — reflect a general mood. The Palestinians are in a waiting mode, because as far as they are concerned the political process has stopped. They are waiting to see what the prime minister will do. They say, however, that the signs they can discern so far are unpropitious and may cause unrest and deterioration in the area.

[Benyovitz] The release of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] leader Shaykh Ahmad Yasin is a security imperative for the Palestinians, but even more so for Israel. This is the surprising message relayed by Amin al-Hindi, the head of the PA general intelligence apparatus. Al-Hindi played a central role in the discovery of Ilan Sa'adon's body. In an interview to IDF Radio from his Gaza headquarters he said that Yasin's contribution to the Sa'adon affair was decisive. Yasin's communication carried the weight of a religious decree and made

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possible the uncovering of the map showing the burial place of Sa'adon's body. Al-Hindi called on Sa'adon's family to repay the shaykh in kind. [passage omitted]

I hope that the Sa'adon family will influence Israeli public opinion into releasing Shaykh Yasin and the other female and male prisoners. Al-Hindi is convinced, however, that Israel has a compelling security reason for releasing Shaykh Yasin. He claims that the split within Hamas between those sitting abroad and those in the territories has enhanced the negative influence of the leaders abroad — who are preaching from Syria and Jordan for the continuation of the terror attacks against Israel. Al-Hindi claims that Shaykh Yasin is a supreme and pragmatic authority and his release can neutralize the Hamas leaders abroad. [passage omitted]

Shaykh Yasin will prevent any outside intervention. Al-Hindi said that Yasin is a realistic person, adding that the Palestinian security services have already explained to their Israeli counterparts the need for releasing the shaykh. Al-Hindi said that no deal has been made yet, adding, however, that the Israelis said they are examining the situation. Al-Hindi said the Palestinians hope that the Netanyahu government will take a positive step regarding this issue, seeing that such a step is vital. [end recording]

Palestinian Affairs: PA Officials Warn Settlement Expansion May Mean Terrorism

TA1308072796 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0400 GMT 13 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Palestinian Authority [PA] member Sa'ib 'Urayqat yesterday said that Defense Minister Yitzhaq Mordekhay's decision to introduce 300 trailers into the territories amounts to saying that the peace process has stopped. Our correspondent Hanan Schlein reports:

[Begin recording] [Schlein] The Palestinians are anxiously following the implementation of the Israeli Government's decision to unfreeze construction in the settlements. The defense minister's decision to approve the placement of hundreds of trailers for schools in Samaria brought about angry reactions by the Palestinian leadership. PA member Sa'ib 'Urayqat states that the government's decisions amount to stopping the peace process.

['Urayqat, in English] Well, I think, systematically now the government is really toppling the peace process upside down, and they have made a very clear choice of settlements over peace, and I think....

[Schlein, translates and continues] 'Urayqat said he believes the Israeli Government will create a situation where in three decades the Middle East will be a second Bosnia. 'Urayqat also said the Israeli prime minister has missed the opportunity to directly appeal to the Palestinian public by voicing tough positions in his AL-QUDS interview. Nevertheless, 'Urayqat and his colleagues hope the government policy will change before it is too late. The current situation is not good, he said.

['Urayqat, in English] I think the peace process is really slipping outside our hands like sand, and if this is the aim of this Israeli Government, to bury the peace process it has done a good job so far. [end recording]

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0500 GMT on 13 August adds: "PA official Fadil Tahbub warned this morning that the government's policy of expanding the settlements will decimate the agreement with the Palestinians and bring about a resumption of terrorism. Tahbub said Israel is provoking the Palestinians, adding that past experience proves that the Palestinians react to provocations by terrorism."]

Palestinian Affairs: FCC Issues Final Statement

JN1208155996 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1300 GMT 12 Aug 96

["Final Statement" issued by the FCC on 11 August after its meetings in Cairo 10-11 August — read by announcer]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Fatah Central Committee [FCC] heard a detailed report from His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat on the overall political situation. The conferees reviewed the Palestinian, Arab, and international reactions to the declared Israeli policy clearly expressed by the Arab, European, and African summits. His excellency the president reviewed the security, economic, and social affairs in the homeland against the backdrop of the arbitrary closures and the siege and starvation policy pursued against the Palestinian people. He also noted that hostile intelligence services and their agents are using the deteriorating economic situation to foment sedition and bring about anarchy to justify the reoccupation of liberated cities, as was planned for the Tulkarm incidents. The brother members of the Fatah Central Committee submitted their reports regarding the tasks assigned them within Fatah, the PLO, and the National Authority.

Having thoroughly debated political, organizational, security, economic, and social issues as well as the future of the negotiating process, the Central Committee underlined Fatah's firm position on the final-status topics, whose outcome the Israeli policy is trying to arbitrarily and unilaterally predetermine, particularly the issues of Jerusalem, settlements, refugees, Hebron,

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and prisoners. The Central Committee denounced the Israeli Government's failure to honor accords and its flagrant noncompliance with the bases and terms of reference of the peace process, especially UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and the land-for-peace principle. The Central Committee also denounced and rejected the Israeli Government's decision to lift the freeze on settlement expansion and its blatant encouragement of a fierce settlement drive aimed at looting more Palestinian land and settling thousands of settlers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip settlements to beef up existing settlements with a view to building additional settlements on the side of bypass roads.

Additionally, the Central Committee condemned and rejected the Israeli Supreme Court's decision allowing Zionists to desecrate holy shrines in holy Jerusalem, including the blessed al-Aqsa Mosque. Moreover, the Central Committee underlined the need to upgrade Fatah's organizational status in the homeland, promote debate within Fatah, consummate the democratization endeavor, and convene Fatah conferences on the local and regional levels to prepare for the convening of a general congress in accordance with Fatah's Basic Law.

In light of an exhaustive debate of the overall issues, the Central Committee adopted the following decisions and directives.

1. In the area of politics and the settlement process:

— The Central Committee underlined its firm adherence to the relevant international legitimacy resolutions, the legal terms of reference of the negotiations, particularly UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, the land-for-peace principle, and the other resolutions pertaining to the Palestine question, the final-status topics, and outstanding issues from the interim period, as follows:

—The Central Committee underlined that holy Jerusalem shall be the capital of an independent Palestinian state, and that it is an indivisible part of the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967, as stipulated in international legitimacy resolutions 252 and 478.

—The Central Committee underscored Fatah's rejection of Israeli settlement activities, which it views as hostile and illegal actions that conflict with the signed agreements, and as an obstacle in the way of peace, not to mention their contravention of all international legitimacy resolutions, which provide for the dismantlement of settlements, particularly UN Security Council Resolution 465.

—The Central Committee stressed our people's right to continue to confront settlement activity.

—The Central Committee underlined the right of the refugees and the displaced people to repatriation in accordance with Resolutions 193 and 237 respectively.

—The Central Committee condemned Israel's procrastination over withdrawal from Hebron city and called for the immediate implementation of the relevant accord.

—The Central Committee stressed the need to release our heroic female and male prisoners in implementation of the relevant accords in order to preserve the dignity of the female and male strugglers. While the Central Committee hailed the prisoners' steadfastness, it insisted on freeing them and preserving their dignity.

—The Central Committee underscored the Palestinian people's right to their land and their natural resources, particularly Palestinian right to Palestinian ground and surface water, as well as the need to implement the water accords, although they are unfair.

—The Central Committee stressed the need to implement accords allowing the National Authority to take full control of Area B and calling for the redeployment of the Israeli Army from the third part of Area C as a first step, six months after the inauguration of the Legislative Council, which is now a prevailing requirement.

Failure to comply with a timetable amounts to assassination of the peace process. This is rejected and condemned by Palestinian, Arab, and international circles. Such failure will prompt us to exercise out right to seek international arbitration to protect the peace process.

2. On the organizational level:

—The Central Committee stressed the importance of enhancing political and organizational awareness through the movement's congresses and ideological mobilization in order to crown the collective awareness provided by these congresses with democratic elections.

3. On the Palestinian level:

—The Central Committee underlined Palestinian popular cohesion and urged support for the PLO and the National Authority in the homeland and the Diaspora.

—The Central Committee stressed the need to maintain Palestinian national unity of all the national and Islamic political forces, as well as the continuation of national dialogue as a protective shield in the face of all enemies' conspiracies.

4. On the Arab level:

—The Central Committee highly valued the unionist role played by His Excellency Egyptian President Muhammad Husni Mubarak during the Arab summit for solidarity and peace and stressed the need to enhance

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this unionist spirit through more meetings by President Yasir 'Arafat with Arab leaders in order to make the unified Arab position a pan-Arab life buoy, to safeguard the achievements of the Palestinian people's National Authority, and to step up Arab pressure on the Israeli Government to change its intransigent policy and commit itself to implementing accords, and to achieve comprehensive, just, and lasting peace on all tracks.

5. On the International level:

—The Central Committee underscored the importance of international support for Palestinian rights, as expressed by statements issued by the conferences of the European states, the major industrial countries, and the African states.

—The Central Committee highly valued Europe's position, particularity the distinguished French and British support for the Palestinian rights.

—The Central Committee also said that despite elections, the United States should comply with its role as a sponsor of the peace process and to guarantee accords bearing the signature of U.S. President Bill Clinton.

In light of the support of our friends in the Russian Federation, the PRC, Japan, the Islamic countries, and the Nonaligned states, our movement realizes that our militant people are not alone in the battle of steadfastness in order to materialize the Palestinian dream of establishing an independent Palestinian state with holy Jerusalem as its capital.

Finally, the Central Committee thanks Egyptian President Husni Mubarak and the Egyptian Government and people for the hospitality accorded to the Central Committee during its stay in Egypt.

Arab-Israeli Talks

Arab-Israeli Talks: Israeli-Palestinian Committee Meetings To Resume 14 Aug

TA1208152996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1400 GMT 12 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Israeli-Palestinian civil affairs committee is to convene on Wednesday [14 August] in Jerusalem, marking the renewal of activities by joint committees. Major General Oren Shahor heads the Israeli side, Jamil al-Tarifi the Palestinian side. Representatives from the Foreign Ministry, Finance Ministry, and the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] will also take part.

On Thursday, the joint committee on the construction of the Palestinian airport in Gaza will meet. Members will also tour the site of the airport in Dahaniya. Defense Minister Yitzhaq Mordekhay has instructed the Israeli committee members to raise violations of the accords with the Palestinians.

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Algeria

Algeria: Syrian Foreign Minister Arrives in Algiers

LD1208124796 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 12 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar'a arrived this afternoon in Algiers on a working visit during which he will discuss, with Algerian officials, the latest developments of the Middle East peace process.

The Syrian foreign minister is carrying a message from the Syrian president, Hafiz al-Asad, to the president of the republic, Liamine Zeroual. [passage omitted] The Syrian foreign minister will leave Algiers this evening.

Algeria: Syria's al-Shar' Meets Zeroual, Views Israeli Positions

JN1208175296 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1515 GMT 12 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Algerian President Liamine Zeroual this afternoon received [Syrian] Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' and an important message from President Hafiz al-Asad. Algerian Foreign Minister Ahmed Attaf and Syrian Ambassador in Algiers Dr. 'Abd-al- Jabbar al-Dahhak attended the meeting.

Replying to journalists' questions after the meeting, al-Shar' said that talks with President Zeroual focused on the results of the Cairo summit and on following up these results in a way that serves the Arab interest.

Al-Shar' added: In this respect, our views were identical on the coming steps regarding what was agreed in Cairo, particularly the peace process and its future. The discussions also dealt with relations between the two fraternal countries and the importance of enhancing and promoting them in various fields as well as the need for coordination between Syria and Algeria on the highest levels.

Al-Shar' asserted that the new Israeli Government does not want peace, and that it makes proposals which insult the Arab intellect. He said Israel alone was responsible for obstructing the peace process because it evades the bases and terms of reference of this process and the land-for-peace principle.

Al-Shar' arrived in Algiers at noon today with a message from President al-Asad to Algerian President Zeroual. He was welcomed at the airport by Algerian Foreign Minister Ahmed Attaf, senior Algerian Foreign Ministry officials, Syrian Ambassador in Algiers Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid [as heard] al-Dahhak, and the Syrian Embassy staff.

In a press statement at the airport, al-Shar' expressed pleasure for visiting Algeria, and said that the visit is part of the consultations among the Arab leaders stemming from the results of the Cairo summit in order to consolidate the Arab position and stress the importance of unifying this position vis-a-vis the current challenges, especially since the new Israeli positions are far from achieving a just and comprehensive peace — the peace which was emphasized by the Cairo summit.

He added: We adhere to the bases of the peace process based on the resolutions of international legitimacy, the land-for-peace principle, and commitment to what was agreed.

Replying to a question on the phases reached during negotiations on the Arab tracks, particularly the Syrian and Lebanese tracks, al- Shar' said: The Netanyahu government did not propose new ideas on resuming the negotiations on any track. The Netanyahu government's Lebanon First proposal was merely an attempt at deception and at evading a just and comprehensive peace and the bases on which the peace process was founded.

Asked about the Arab option reached through the current moves, al-Shar' said: The Arab option was expressed at the summit. It means working for a just and comprehensive peace based on international legitimacy and the land-for-peace principle. This position is in harmony with the position of the international community, particularly the position of the European summit in Florence and the seven industrialized states in Lyon which called for implementing the resolutions of international legitimacy.

Al-Shar' added: Israel, however, is the only party that defies these positions and tries to evade what is required of it; namely, withdrawal in return for establishing peace, by fabricating excuses and pretexts. If Israel really wants to withdraw unconditionally from Lebanon, it needs no concurrence from anyone. Thus, Israel only has to implement Security Council Resolution 425 which calls for its immediate withdrawal.

Egypt

Egypt: Al-Janzuri Denies Cabinet Reshuffle Imminent

NC1308070196 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0612 GMT 13 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 13 Aug (MENA)—Prime Minister Dr. Kamal al-Janzuri has asserted that recent reports about a likely cabinet reshuffle are not true.

In a statement published today by the newspapers AL-JUMHURIYAH and AL-WAFD, al-Janzuri says the

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government is implementing the instructions of President Husni Mubarak, who follows the government's day-to-day work.

Meanwhile, the newspaper AL-AKHBAR says that the performance of Dr. al-Janzuri's government earns further trust and credibility with the Egyptian public every day, both because of the numerous decisions it has made regarding many chronic problems and its commitment to following up and implementing these decisions.

In an editorial entitled "Al-Janzuri Government's Credibility Underlined," AL-AKHBAR says that citizens have hopes of further government achievements every day. It refers to al-Janzuri's statement two days ago that the income of Egyptians will now rise gradually until it reaches international levels, and indeed, exceeds incomes in some neighboring countries.

AL-AKHBAR adds: Dr. Al-Janzuri has accompanied his promising remarks with further facilities for investments. Investments are basically designed to serve the citizens' interests, improve their productivity, and give them a chance to be creative and build a better future for their children.

Egypt: Interior Ministry Tracks 'Terrorists' In, Outside Egypt

NC1208152896 Cairo MENA in English 1430 GMT 12 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Aug 12 (MENA)—Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi said that the Ministry of Interior was tracking terrorists inside and outside Egypt. "There are continued consultations with Sudan to find a solution to what is taking place there," the minister said at a meeting with university youth last night.

Al-Alfi said there were contacts with Arab and African countries and the United Nations to agree on a unified agreement, through the world organization, to stipulate that terrorism is not a political offense but a criminal crime and that terrorist criminals should be extradited and should not be given political asylum.

Libya

Libya: Al-Qadhdhafi, Mubarak Say No To Weapons of Mass Destruction

LD1108220896 Tripoli Libyan Television Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The brother leader of the revolution has held a telephone conversation with Husni Mubarak, the president of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

The conversation revolved around the necessity of ridding the Middle East region of all types of weapons of mass destruction, including bacterial, chemical, and nuclear ones. This is considered to be a prerequisite for the realization of stability in the region. Security must be balanced, because any lack of balance in security will lead to an imbalance of forces and stir up enmity. Particularly, after the confirmation of Israel's possession and manufacturing of all types of weapons of mass destruction: bacterial, chemical, and nuclear.

Libya: Tarhunah 'Industrial River' Project Visited

JN1208081296 Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 9 Aug 96 pp 36-37

[FBIS Translated Text] Tarhunah — The previously obscure Libyan town of Tarhunah has now become the focus of international attention. U.S. intelligence agencies have circulated reports that say the town has turned into a chemical weapons arsenal. This is a serious charge. A report published in the American magazine TIME in April offered a drastic solution to the problem, as suggested by a top American official: Hit Tarhunah with an atomic bomb!

Although the Egyptians, who have offered their good offices, assert the project is part of "the great industrial river project" and the tunnels that have been dug have no function other than to carry water, the Americans think otherwise. What is the truth? And what is going on in Tarhunah? AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI went there, without seeking assistance from the authorities, to see things for itself, away from "official wishes" and protocol procedures.

Because the country is under an air blockade, travel to Libya is either by land from Egypt via al-Sallum border point or Tunisia through Ras Jadir, or by sea from Malta to Tripoli Harbor. Having weighed the three options, we decided on the Tunisian route because that country is the closest to Tripoli. To become familiar with the kind of conditions the Libyan people are having to endure, one needs to experience the details first-hand. We set off from Jarbah Airport on our way to Tripoli. The "public transport" car set out on its journey at twilight. We arrived at the Ras Jadir "gate" around 2000. Things looked normal enough, except for the bustle raised by the "petrol merchants" plying their trade between the Libyan and Tunisian border points. Customs officials asked us whether we are from Lebanon and made us feel welcome. We were greeted with the light-hearted humor of the customs officers who, contrary to what we had heard about them, treated arrivals with courtesy.

The car then proceeded on its way to Tripoli. We were surprised to see a good many grocery stores and restaurants along the entire length of the road from Ras Jadir to Tripoli. They are open day and night, with

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customers keeping most of them busy all the time. More striking are the restaurants that serve grilled meat for travelers around the clock.

We arrived in Tripoli around midnight. Asked by the driver if I wanted to rest for the night in Tripoli, I said, No, let us be on our way to Tarhunah so that we make it shortly before dawn, when I will be able to see what is going on, away from the curiosity of nosy people. At some point along the way, we had a little rest. The driver wanted to take a nap, and "the car needed rest." Two hours later, we continued our journey and arrived at the Tarhunah intersection around 0400. Is this Tarhunah? I asked. No, said the driver, this is the road that leads there. But I wondered why there was work going on during the night. It is "the industrial river project," the driver said.

Ongoing work

Floodlights have turned night into day, giant bulldozers dig a path in the earth, and huge trucks carry the excavated dirt elsewhere. Traffic has been rerouted to clear the way for the huge and unremitting project.

I asked: What is the relationship between the industrial river and Tarhunah? The driver said that, because Tarhunah sits on a mountain, the water pipeline must pass through the mountain in order to get to the coast. This is why there are tunnels burrowed through the mountain, as would happen in any comparable project elsewhere in the world, the driver observed.

Before setting off on our journey for Tarhunah, I asked the driver: Why are they working around the clock? He said the workers on the project are trying to meet the challenge of delivering water from the industrial river to Tripoli by 1 September.

As morning arrived, things began to grow clearer. Everything that is taking place on the ground indicates a firm determination to complete the giant project. At the project site, we met with Engineer Fu'ad Duhaym, who heads the project's department at a Libyan firm run by Libyan youths who are working in cooperation with personnel from al-Fadil Bu-'Umar to implement the project. After the usual greetings, I asked Engineer Fu'ad Duhaym what was going on in Tarhunah.

He answered: Simply speaking, we are working on a civil engineering project that will be something Libya can be proud of; it is Libya's historic miracle. Quoting Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, the engineer add: "It is the last serious push to save lives." We are using state-of-the art technology to transfer water from the heart of the desert to coastal towns, through pipes buried seven meters underground, to serve the people. Water will reach this place, the Sidi al-Sa'id region in Tarhunah, and will then be pumped to the Abu-Zayyan Reservoir in Gharyan, which feeds the western mountain area. The river branches out toward al-Qaddahiyah and then heads west to feed western coastal towns, al-Jafarah plains, and existing agricultural projects. The quantity of sweet water transferred at this stage is 2.5 million cubic meters per day.

Chemical Weapons Plant

What about the story that the mountain tunnels are chemical weapons plants?

Everybody knows that the project is being implemented in stages, and the tunnels are part of the second stage, with water flowing through them via al-Hasawnah mountain to the north to connect with the second stage system in al-Qaddahiyah region. When this stage is completed, Libya will be connected to the industrial river water system. Libya will have transformed an idea into a reality and will have forged a change in the social life of the people. Coinciding with the 27th anniversary of the revolution, Tripoli should receive the first flow of sweet water from these tunnels in the midst of a huge public gala, after having suffered the prolonged torture of thirst.

The Sidi al-Sa'ih reservoir is 205 meters long and 135 meters wide; its water level is eight meters deep. Its floor-to-ceiling height is 8.6 meters. It features 1,200 concrete columns, and 200,000 cubic meters of water will flow through it per day. The Sidi al-Sa'ih reservoir, which will feed Tripoli with sweet water, ranks as the most important of its kind in the world. The reservoir is equipped with facilities to meet surpluses. It has eight cleaning chambers and four chambers for each cell that end in manholes outside. This is in addition to two approach chambers and two exit chambers that converge in one opening to the line that carries water to Tripoli. The reservoir is outfitted with a communications and control system where the most up-to-date technology has been used for monitoring and to link gauges and the control system to ascertain the upper and lower water levels and the rate and amount of flow. The water from this reservoir pours into another huge gathering and stabilizing reservoir in al-Qarabulli, 60 km east of Tripoli. It is linked to the main part of the river, which passes through Tarhunah and the rugged mountains through which the tunnels have been dug and in which the pipes have been laid. These tunnels have been alleged by misinformation agencies to be chemical weapons plants.

Is Tripoli ready to cope with the arrival of water from the industrial project?

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Numerous firms are upgrading and boosting the productivity of Tripoli's water networks. These firms are working day and night in a hectic race to adjust for the arrival of the industrial river water. And the completion of the Sidi al-Sa'ih Reservoir, the existence of which was not known until Col. Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi visited it, was an occasion that all Libyans turned into a surprise of overwhelming love.

The Libyan engineer adds: What you are seeing demonstrates how a mix of resolve, willpower, ambition, and the latest technology can triumph over the desert, backwardness, and enemies who have been confounded by our rising to the challenge of implementing the largest industrial irrigation network in the world, stretching approximately 4,000 km. As Libya's pride of the twentieth century, the project surely does not deserve to be hit by an atomic bomb.

At the end of the visit, we decided to proceed over land toward Egypt. We headed in the direction of the Libyan coastal town of Sirte, which has gradually become the political capital of Libya. From there, we went to Benghazi, where we stayed overnight. At dawn we set off for Darnah, Tobruk, and al-Sallum, crossing the border at midnight and arriving in Alexandria the next morning. Thanks to the air blockade on Libya, the trip was real torture.

Sudan

Sudan: Arrests Follow Protests Against Higher Prices

NC1008175796 Cairo MENA in English 1734 GMT 10 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Aug 10 (MENA)—The Sudanese authorities have, during the past few days, detained more than 25 persons and big numbers of Sudanese families in the different governorates including the capital Khartoum.

The campaign, according to the Sudanese Organization for Human Rights, came in retaliation for the riots that erupted everywhere in the country to protest the rise in prices of the basic commodities.

A big number of the detainees were subjected to inhuman torture, according to the organization, and some of them were hospitalized.

Sudan: Nubah Rebels Arrive in Khartoum After Peace Deal

EA1208190196 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The SPLM-SPLA [Sudan People's Liberation Movement-Sudan People's Liberation Army] central committee delegation, Nubah Mountains sector, and representatives of the New Sudan Force for Peace arrived in Khartoum this morning after the two sides signed an agreement on the declaration of principles with the government following their defection from the rebel movement. A joint communique signed by all the sides stated that differences should be settled through dialogue and that the Nubah Mountains issue should be solved within the framework of a united Sudan.

Dr. Habib Ahmad [Marsum], governor of Southern Kurdufan state, said in a press statement that he was happy about the return of the Nubah Mountains' people to their homeland. He said: We would like to work as a united force for reconstruction and rebuilding after the damages caused by the war. He confirmed Sudan Government's commitment to the declaration of principles. He referred to the guarantees given by the state to implement the agreement.

Retired Brigadier Hamad 'Abd-al-Karim al-Sayyid, the finance minister of Southern Kurdufan state and leader of the government delegation to the negotiations, said that the declaration represented the first step toward building a comprehensive peace on the Nubah Mountains [words indistinct].

Mr. Muhammad Harun [Kafi Abu-Ra's], chairman of the SPLM-SPLA central committee, Nubah Mountains sector, stressed that their defection from rebel John Garang came about after they were convinced about the proposed revolution's programs and the realization of the demands which the people of the Nubah Mountains have been asking for for so long while rebel Garang continued to be preoccupied with marginal issues. Mr. Kafi spoke about the need to stop the shedding of blood and entrenchment of peace in the country.

For his part, Mr. Yunis [Domi Kalo], head of the political leadership of the New Sudan Force for Peace, in a news conference attended by all sides at Khartoum airport this morning, called on the rebel Garang to lay down his arms and return to the homeland to join the peace march. He stressed that the war was futile, particularly after the achievement of federalism, the distribution of resources and power, and the empowerment of the people. He said that the war victims were innocent but the rebel movement had become a vehicle for foreign powers. He appealed for peace calls to be made by regional and international organizations. Meanwhile Father Abbas Ghabbush expressed his happiness at the return of the Nubah Mountains people to their homeland. He stressed that the peace March was on and they would work for peace in Sudan.

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Sudan: Chad, CAR, Sudan, Set Date for Tripartite Summit

EA1008141896 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 9 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Lieutenant General Umar al-Bashir, president of the republic, returned to Khartoum today from Njamena after taking part in celebrations in Chad to mark the inauguration of President Idris Deby.

In a press statement, Lt. Gen. Umar al-Bashir affirmed the profound nature of Chadian-Sudanese relations. Speaking about President Deby's inauguration, he said the results of the Chadian elections confirmed the extent of support of citizens for President Deby, which is likely to contribute to development and stability in the republic. The president of the republic explained that the visit was a good opportunity for meeting the Chadian president and the president of the Central African Republic [CAR].

They announced the convening of a tripartite summit in Khartoum from 11 to 14 September to draw up guidelines on relations between Sudan, Chad and the Central African Republic. Lt. Gen. al-Bashir added that the planned summit would set out a model for regional integration in the African continent.

Tunisia

Tunisia, Libya To Cooperate Against Fundamentalists

MM1308111896 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 11 Aug 96 p 6

[Unattributed report: "Tunisian-Libyan Coordination To Face Up to the Fundamentalists"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tunis, AL-HAYAH— Informed sources have stated to AL-HAYAH that Tunisia and Libya have developed their security cooperation lately to face up to the extremist fundamentalist movements. The sources added that hitherto, the Libyans paid no great attention to combating extremist fundamentalist phenomena but they have now begun to do so following the growth of this phenomenon in their country and its assumption of serious dimensions, leading Libyan officials to try to benefit from the neighboring countries' experience in combating it.

The security coordination between Tunisia and Libya was one of the basic topics on the agenda of the discussions held by a high-ranking Tunisian delegation headed by Prime Minister Hamed Karoui which visited Libya recently to attend meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian Joint Higher Committee.

The joint statement issued in the capitals of the two countries following these meetings reflected an identity of views between the two countries and the ending of differences in the way they dealt with the fundamentalist current hitherto.

The two sides expressed their determination to combat "all manifestations of terrorism, violence, extremism, and atheism that are foreign to our Islamic religion and the values of our Arab and Islamic society." For the first time the two governments pledged "to work together to contain this phenomenon which poses a threat to the progress and stability of societies."

The message which Said Ben Mustapha, Tunisian secretary of state for Maghreb Union affairs and the emissary of Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, delivered yesterday to Libyan Leader Col. Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi is believed to be most likely connected with the question of coordination in combating extremist movements in addition to the exchange of views on the best means of boosting the activities of the Arab Maghreb Union [UMA], which is comprised of Algeria, Morocco, and Mauritania in addition to Tunisia and Libya.

Leaders Ben Ali and Al-Qadhdhafi had discussed the question of saving the UMA from the crisis currently afflicting it during their recent meeting on the margin of the Arab summit conference which was held in Cairo recently.

Informed sources have said that the Libyans' awareness of the growing threat of the local fundamentalist movements was one of the principal causes of their rapprochement with Tunisia after the estrangement that marred relations between the two countries following the declaration by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher in Washington last January about the conclusion of an agreement between his two counterparts, Tunisian Foreign Minister Habib Ben Yahya and the (then) Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq, on raising the level of diplomatic representation between their countries to the level of relations bureaus.

The sources have pointed out also that the speedy development of the Libyan attitude toward the local and Arab Maghreb fundamentalist movements has also constituted grounds for a similar rapprochement between Libya and Algeria in addition to the previous [Libyan] cooperation that existed with Egypt in this regard.

In light of the Tunisian-Libyan, Algerian-Libyan, and Tunisian-Algerian contacts, the observers believe the coming days will most likely witness the crystallization of a tripartite coordination of efforts among the three countries in combating the growing fundamentalist current in the region, which could also include Egypt, which has for years been calling for the development of cooperation and the bolstering of regional coordination to contain extremist movements.

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Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia: Six 'Arab Afghans' Reportedly Confess to al-Khubar Bombing

MM1308103296 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 10-11 Aug 96 p 1

[Unattributed report: "Saudi Arabia: Arrest of Six 'Afghans' Who Confessed Having Carried Out the Bombing; United States Shows Its Power With a Landing in Kuwait...Iran Pledges To Deter It"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London, Riyadh, Dubai, AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI — Reports from the Saudi capital and elsewhere on Friday have confirmed that a group of "Arab Afghans" has admitted carrying out last June's al-Khubar bombing which left 19 U.S. personnel dead, and that the Saudi authorities are preparing to issue a statement detailing the suspects' confessions.

Informed sources told AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI that the group includes six suspects from the al-Thuqbah district in al-Khubar. They are members of the al-Jamiyin group (in reference to Shaykh Muhammad Iman Jami) [not further identified] and they have confessed to the Saudi authorities to enable hundreds of their colleagues who are detained to be released, and to alleviate their families' plight.

In the context of their efforts to find the perpetrators of the blast, the Saudi security forces carried out, directly after the blast, a wide-ranging campaign of arrests which targeted all those connected to the Arab Afghans, since they were prime suspects.

The al-Jamiyin group was one of the fiercest Afghan groups in the fight against the communists in Afghanistan. Its members became famous for their courage in battle and their desire for martyrdom. They are a Sunni group which believes that obedience to superiors is a basic tenet of the faith.

The sources stressed that this group's confession came as a shock to the Saudi Government, because it supported them, believing them to be loyal.

Sources close to the al-Jamiyin group said that the six suspects easily confessed to the security forces, because they believe that their action is a form of jihad and that their execution will be a testimony, and said also that they always yearn to die for their beliefs.

The sources said that the six suspects are currently being held in al-Jubayl prison and are being questioned by Taha al-Khusayfat, the director of general investigations, under the direct supervision of Prince Nayif Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the interior minister, who has banned any other side from having access to them or questioning them.

Meanwhile, Prince 'Abdallah's National Guard forces are currently conducting special patrols in Riyadh and other cities, and guarding public buildings and the U.S. Forces' Headquarters.

Saudi opposition sources in London said on Friday that the Saudi authorities have arrested a number of suspects, including two Lebanese and two Kuwaitis, and extracted confessions from them by torture, and that, this time, the confessions will condemn Iran. [passage omitted]

Saudi Arabia: King Fahd Chairs Cabinet Meeting on Peace Process, Somalia

LD1308090996 Riyadh Saudi Arabian Kingdom Radio Network in Arabic 2230 GMT 12 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In a meeting chaired by King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, custodian of the two holy mosques, held in Salam Palace in Jeddah this evening, the Council of Ministers discussed the current efforts made to resume peace negotiations in the Middle East.

In a statement to the Saudi news agency, SPA, at the conclusion of the meeting, Information Minister Dr. Fu'ad Bin 'Abd-al-Salam al-Farisi said that within this framework the king had briefed the council on his meetings with his brothers His Excellency Husni Mubarak, president of the Arab Republic of Egypt, and His Majesty King Husayn Bin-Talal of the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan during their short visits to the kingdom.

The custodian of the two holy mosques said that during the two meetings the talks dealt with all the means that could give an impetus to the Middle East peace process and resume negotiations in the Syrian and Lebanese tracks, as well as coordinate efforts in all issues and bolster brotherly relations between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and both Egypt and Jordan in all fields.

King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, may God protect him, described the outcome of the two meetings as successful and constructive. The talks were aimed at achieving good goals for the benefit of the Arab and Islamic homeland and its crucial issues. He reiterated the firm position of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with regard to peace in the region: The need to continue the peacemaking process to attain a just and comprehensive peace in the region and in all tracks, according to the framework and bases from which it had proceeded at the Madrid Conference.

The minister of information said that the council reviewed the latest developments of various issues in the regional and international arenas, particularly the situation in the brotherly Somalia. Within this context, the

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custodian of the two holy mosques called on brothers in Somalia to resort to reason and wisdom in settling their differences in order to maintain their national interests and deliver Somalia from the devastation and bloodshed that had befallen on it. [passage omitted]

Saudi Arabia: Paper Sees U.S.-Iran D'Amato 'Escalation' as 'Untimely'

MM1208143596 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 10 Aug 96 p 9

[Editorial: "Another War? Once Again We Hear War Cries in a Region Exhausted by Wars and in Need of a Respite"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The tension prevailing after the U.S. President's signature of the D'Amato bill, which openly accuses Iran and Libya of encouraging terrorism, has once again nearly dragged the Middle East toward the clatter of war and its ruinous consequences, despite the fact that barely six years have passed since the war to liberate Kuwait, with its aftereffects still visible and burdensome. If the whole world is yearning for some peace and quiet and is urging that disputes be rsolved through dialogue and reason, the Middle East in particular is weakened by wars and tensions, and hoping for stability, peace, and a chance to catch its breath. Hence, the current escalation between the United States and Iran is untimely, and at odds with the general atmosphere which should prevail in a region which is of concern not only to its own people, but also to the whole world, in view of the fact that it is an energy center, a link between continents, and a crossroads for nearly every civilization. That is why any kind of turmoil there will be in nobody's interest.

We should also point out that it has been proved on a daily basis that terrorism serves no purpose. Instead, it only helps inflame and stoke the anger and emotions of hateful people and the desire for confrontation and revenge. Political changes can no longer be achieved through violence or by illegal means. The world powers should be aware of this fact, and should use rational, humane, and legitimate methods to express themselves. Most lessons learned by humanity every day show that violence and the disasters it causes serve no other purpose and achieve no other objective than shedding blood and spreading fear, concern, and instability. These are objectives that neither a rational person nor a political force trying hard to introduce reform should aim for. Confronting terrorism is undoubtedly an international responsibility. However, fighting and violence do not always provide the effective means of eliminating it. Active diplomacy and other dialogue methods still play a part in uprooting terrorism in the world, particularly if the dialogue is between responsible political forces rather than mercenary gangs filled with harmful emotions caused by misguided notions and immature minds.

In such serious matters, which could lead to war and ruin, politics should be used neither for propaganda purposes, nor to obtain votes, nor to justify creating a political situation which no longer has many supporters. Gambling with people's lives and civilized achievements which took generations to achieve is an action which does not befit a civilized person or a wise and responsible leadership. Perhaps this current crisis will help discover the good and positive aspects of peace between the United States and Iran and all the region's states.

Yemen

Yemen: Yemeni-Eritrean Clashes Reported Around Zuqar Island

MM1308112396 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 13 Aug 96 pp 1,6

[Unattributed report: "Yemeni-Eritrean Clash on Zuqar Island"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Sanaa, London, AL-HAYAH — Informed unofficial sources in Sanaa said yesterday that military clashes took place between Yemeni forces stationed on the Yemeni island of Zuqar and Eritrean patrols and gunboats trying to land on the Yemeni island of al-Hanish al-Sughra to carry out attacks on Yemeni patrols in Yemeni territorial waters in the Red Sea.

The reports said that the Yemeni forces responded to the Eritrean fire, to force the attacking Eritrean forces to return to their positions and prevent them from taking control of the Yemeni island of Hanish al-Sughra island, in an attempt to abide by the terms of the agreement of principles between the two countries. [passage omitted]

As of yesterday evening, no Yemeni official sources would confirm that the clashes had taken place and no French statement was announced to either confirm or deny these reports, particularly in view of the fact that France is the mediator in the Yemeni-Eritrean conflict and is the primary sponsor of the agreement of principles which both sides have accepted. [passage omitted]

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Iraq: Foreign Minister Criticizes U.S. D'Amato Law

JN1208143596 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1332 GMT 12 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 12 Aug (INA)—Iraq said the U.S. laws and legislations, which Washington wants to impose on the world, are illegal and violate the international law and the UN Charter.

In a statement to INA, Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf said: Iraq, which suffered, and is still suffering, from the U.S. policies that violate international norms and laws, adds its voice to the voices of all the states that reject the unfair and oppressive U.S. conduct.

The foreign minister noted that the United States recently endorsed a new law called the D'Amato Law to punish non-U.S. companies and parties that sign contracts, or invest more than $40 million per year in oil or gas projects in Libya or Iran under the pretext of punishing what it calls the states that sponsor terrorism.

He said this U.S. law follows another U.S. legislation, the Helms-Burton law, issued on 12 March 1996, against Cuba. This law also specifies sanctions against non-U.S. companies and parties that have commercial and economic dealings with Cuba.

He said that this American action, which contravenes all international laws and norms and the UN Charter, proves the correctness of the principles that were adopted at an early stage by the leadership in Iraq, at the helm of which is His Excellency President Saddam Husayn. This leadership highlighted the American authoritarian mentality which seeks to impose its sway and hegemony over the entire world.

Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf asserted: The new U.S. law represents extreme disregard of the entire international community. It exposes Washington's intentions and policies that seek to tighten the noose on the world's nations, particularly in the southern hemisphere, and force sovereign and independent states to take part in the crime of imposing blockade against other peoples and sovereign and independent countries, whose sin is rejecting the American interference and hegemony. This reminds of the fact that Iraq was the first country to expose and confront the U.S. hegemony plan, thus a treacherous thirty-nation aggression was staged against it.

He said that the U.S. authoritarian mentality represented in the laws that are to be imposed against the world was rejected, even by many countries that are considered friends and allies of the United States. He noted that the reason for this is that the world nations started to realize more and more that the essence of the U.S. policy strongly clashes with the foundations and responsibilities of the countries that form the international community. These foundations rely on deep-rooted standards of equitable dealing, which is based on the rules of sound interaction among independent and sovereign states, the international law, and the UN Charter, and not on provocation, use of force, oppression, and blackmail.

The foreign minister added that the new American law shows the big contradiction plaguing the U.S. policy. He noted that this law contradicts, both in letter and spirit, the rules of the world trade agreement, which seeks to achieve freedom of trade and flow of capital and investments among the various countries.

Iraq: U.S. Delay Over 'Oil for Food' Seen as Part of 'Plan'

MM1308110896 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 12 Aug 96 p 15

[Editorial: "Iraq...and U.S. Intentions"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The U.S. Government has recently announced its approval of the plan for the implementation of the [UN] "oil for food" resolution, which permits Iraq to sell $1 billion worth of oil every three months so as to be able to purchase essential supplies of food and medicine.

A few days prior to its approval, the U.S. Government declared that it will not give the green light for the implementation of the plan until it receives guarantees that the agreement will be implemented under effective control. A U.S. Government spokesman stated that the American reservations pertained to the number of observers who will monitor the Iraqi oil sale transactions and the location of their headquarters.

A look at these reservations indicates that they are flimsy and superficial, aimed merely at obstructing the implementation of the agreement, particularly as the agreement which was signed between the United Nations and Iraq was endorsed by the UN Secretary General and the [other] four permanent members of the UN Security Council, was the result of exhaustive negotiations which covered all points, and responded to all the previous American reservations.

Most likely, the United States had hedged its bets on the likelihood of Iraq's rejecting the resolution because of the unfair conditions the resolution contained. So when it felt that a change was taking place in Iraq's way of thinking and course of action, its inclination toward greater flexibility and its avoidance of nervous reaction, it found itself trapped and so began to look for new reservations and conditions to gain more time. This in turn led to its total exposure before the UN Security

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Council and the other members of the council and its finding no alternative but to agree.

It would perhaps be no exaggeration to say that the successful negotiations which UN Secretary General Butrus Butrus-Ghali conducted with the Iraqi side about the mechanism for implementation of the resolution was the reason behind the current American campaign against him and the U.S. demand that his term of office should not be renewed. There is yet another reason, namely, his insistence on the submission of a report about the Israeli massacre at the Lebanese village of Qana for discussion by the UN Security Council against American wishes.

The United States' declaration of its acceptance of the "oil for food" resolution, after such long procrastination, does not mean that it will refrain from obstructing the matter at any moment. This is because U.S: intentions toward the Arabs in general and the Iraqi people in particular have been evident. Indeed, the United States is responsible for the death of hundreds of children and sick people and the permanent disablement of thousands of others because of malnutrition or the shortage of the necessary vaccines to combat epidemics and the lack of the spare parts needed for the operation of water purification and electricity generation stations.

Now that the true U.S. intentions have become clear, we hope the Arab countries will rush to send consignments of food and medicine to Iraq. In this context, one cannot but express appreciation for the steps taken by Libya, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Sudan to send grain, food, and medicine to sons of the Iraqi people to alleviate their sufferings in these hard times.

The Iraqis have always supported their nation's causes of destiny and never spared their blood and funds in this regard. So we have to return their favor in these hard times which they are going through, so as to consolidate their steadfastness against the siege that is imposed on them and deepen their faith in Arabism and their belonging to the Arab nation.

It has become evident that the United States is the one that besieges Iraq and kills Iraqi children by keeping them hungry and sick. All talk about the implementation of the UN resolutions is nothing but a plot that contributes to the American plan.

Iraq: KDP Alleges PUK Collusion With Iranian Revolutionary Guards

NC0908190696 Paris AFP in English 1440 GMT 9 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nicosia, Aug 9 (AFP) — The Iraqi-Kurdish rebel group the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) shelled a housing complex in northern Iraq, killing nine civilians and injuring 21 others, rival rebel group the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) said Friday [9 August].

"PUK forces shelled on August 7, with mortars and artillery, the Kasnazan housing complex 10 kilometers (six miles) northeast of Irbil," the main city in Kurdish-controlled northern Iraq, said a KDP statement sent to AFP in Nicosia.

The KDP said the "indiscriminate" shelling killed nine people, including five 12-year-old children, and injured 21 people.

"We condemn this unwarranted attack on civilians. The attack came only days after the PUK leadership has led and assisted Iranian Revolutionary Guards forces to carry out a serious incursion into northern Iraq," added the statement.

Last month an estimated 2,000 Iranian troops pushed 50 kilometers (30 miles) inside northern Iraq to attack bases of the Iranian-Kurdish group the Democratic Party of Iranian Kordistan.

The KDP statement said the PUK had "obtained substantial amount of weapons and munitions from the Iranian forces," adding that "the PUK is preparing the ground for a new round of fighting to undermine the peace process."

The PUK, led by Jalal Talabani, and the KDP of Mas'ud Barzani secured control of northern Iraq in 1991 when the U.S.-led allies imposed an air exclusion zone there following their victory over Iraq in the 1991 Gulf war that drove Iraqi troops from Kuwait.

Both the PUK and KDP won 50 percent of the seats in the Kurdish parliamentary elections in 1992, but fighting broke out between the factions in May 1994 and more than 2,000 people have died in the conflict so far.

The PUK and KDP signed a series of confidence-building measures earlier this year as a first step towards ending their conflict, and last year in Dublin they signed an agreement in principle.

Iraq: Saddam Meets Ministry Officials; 'Creative Ideas' Reviewed

JN1208204396 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1925 GMT 12 Aug 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] In front of leader President Saddam Husayn, the victorious by the will of God, a number of senior officials from the mujahidin of the Ministry of Industry and Mineral Resources reviewed 113

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ideas which will serve our mujahidin people and which came at the instructions of the leader president during his meeting with directors general of the government who came to congratulate his excellency on the Great March Day. At that time, his excellency called it the gift of the meeting, as part of his excellency's call on all Iraqis to use Iraq's creativity to confront the unjust, aggressive blockade and ease the burden on our loyal, steadfast people.

'Adnan 'Abd-al-Majid, minister of industry and mineral resources, reviewed the offered ideas in front of leader President Saddam Husayn, the victorious by the will of God, praising his excellency's great, continued support for the creative people throughout our dear homeland — support which will deprive the enemies of the nation of a chance to harm it.

A number of the mujahidin of the Ministry of Industry and Mineral Resources then reviewed their creative ideas before the leader of Iraqi creativity. His excellency expressed his valuable and important views and observations during the review. The leader president, the victorious by the will of God, thanked the creative people for their efforts to serve the people and improve and increase our national product. His excellency then set [break in reception] next April for offering new gifts, God willing. His excellency, may God preserve him, [break in reception] should be put into effect, that participation should be expanded, that the owner of the idea should be named, and that 25 million dinars should be given as a present to the owners of the 25 most successful ideas. The same bases that were defined on the day of the meeting will also be used to select the new ideas at all ministries.

At the end of the meeting, leader President Saddam Husayn, the victorious by the will of God, thanked the audience, who pledged to his excellency to continue their efforts out of love for the homeland and due to the leader's care to achieve prosperity for our steadfast people.

Iraq: Islamic Council Meeting Reviews Methods of Action

JN1208113496 Baghdad AL-'IRAQ in Arabic 30 Jul 96 p 2

[FBIS Translated Text] The Executive Council of the Popular Islamic Conference Organization met yesterday under its chairman Dr. 'Ali al-Faqir. At the meeting, Dr. 'Abd-al-Razzaq 'Abd-al-Rahman al-Sa'di, secretary general of the organization, reviewed the organization's methods of action in the coming phase, including ways to contact Islamic organizations, bodies, and figures and the council's own efforts to guarantee Islamic action against the evil plans of the enemies.

It was decided at the meeting, which was attended by Dr. 'Abd-al- Mun'im Ahmad Salih, minister of awqaf and Islamic affairs and member of the Executive Council, to meet again in December.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Mun'im Ahmad Salih, minister of awqaf and religious affairs, met yesterday with Dr. 'Ali al-Faqir, chairman of the Executive Council of the Popular Islamic Conference Organization, which is based in Baghdad. Discussions during this meeting, which was attended by Dr. 'Abd-Razzaq al-Sa'di, secretary general of the organization and the director general of religious guidance and pilgrimage affairs in the ministry, dealt with adequate methods to strengthen popular Islamic action in the service of Islam and Muslims.

Dr. 'Ali al-Faqir described the continuation of the unjust embargo on the Iraqi people as a blatant violation of all heavenly values and international norms.

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Israel: Netanyahu Interviewed on Settlements, Jerusalem

TA1208145596 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 11 Aug 96 p 9

[Interview with Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu by Walid Abu-al-Zalf and Mahir al-Shaykh on 7 August; place not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Al-QUDS] Let us begin by talking about the issue that raised a wave of anger among the Palestinians — namely, your government's special decision to lift the restrictions on settlement expansion. You have announced more than once that this means allowing the settlements to expand according to what you describe as "natural growth." "Natural growth" is a flexible term that might mean 40,000, 50,000, or perhaps 70,000 new housing units. What is the real meaning of "natural growth?"

[Netanyahu] I have no idea, because we have not yet determined the number of housing units that will be built. We did not decide to build "a specific number" of housing units.

In fact, there are three issues related to settlement activity: The first involves the establishment of new settlements, and we have not adopted any decision in this sphere.

As for the second issue, it relates to the "natural growth" of the settlements. This means the expansion of existing settlements, and we adopted a decision in this regard whereby we will allow expansion without restrictions but under government supervision. I and the defense minister established a specific mechanism that specifies the general character of this process.

The third issue relates to building new roads. We will adopt a decision on this issue within two weeks.

The government's decision relates only to the second issue — namely, to natural development and the expansion of the current existing settlements.

[Al-QUDS] Can we understand from your words that this expansion will not be without a plan and that it will be subject to government supervision?

[Netanyahu] Of course, there is the so-called "master plan" according to which this expansion will be determined. If a settlement presents a new master plan, its approval will be dependent upon a decision by the government, after I and the defense minister present it to the government. This means that there will be governmental supervision as well as a government policy and that such decisions will not be left to a certain ministry or quarter.

[AL-QUDS] Another pressing question: When will you meet with President 'Arafat?

[Netanyahu] I had the feeling you would ask me this question.

I said in the past that when I feel that the developments necessitate such a meeting, I will not hesitate in this regard. As for now, I believe that there are more burning issues.

This is on the level of the prime minister. As for the ministerial level, our Foreign Minister David Levi met with Mr. 'Arafat. This meeting was fruitful. Another meeting will be held soon between Defense Minister Yitzhaq Mordekhay and Mr. 'Arafat. In that meeting, they are expected to discuss issues of common interest, especially in the security sphere. In the future, other ministers will hold similar meetings and an Israeli-Palestinian "steering committee" will be formed.

There are many outstanding issues that must be discussed. As I said, when I feel that the developments require my meeting with 'Arafat, I will discuss the possibility of meeting with him.

[AL-QUDS] Yes, but there are many thorny issues that must be discussed and decisions that must be made regarding the Palestinians and Israelis. Although there are no outstanding issues of special importance between Israel, on one hand, and Jordan and Egypt on the other, you found it appropriate to visit those two countries and meet with their leaders while, at the same time, you disregard the need to meet with the Palestinian president.

[Netanyahu] No, I do not disregard the possibility of holding such a meeting. I will do exactly what I said I would do. I said I will study the possibility of holding such a meeting at the appropriate time. I said that we will not freeze relations with the Palestinian Authority [PA]. I also said that we will hold contacts and establish official and unofficial relations with it. We are walking down a clear path. Anyone who believes that the Likud government will freeze relations with the PA will greatly disappointed. We seek to move forward. Naturally, we have several questions and feelings of apprehension regarding pledges that were not met. I am aware of the fact that the PA has similar feelings toward us, but until we — 'Arafat and I — are able to solve the existing differences between us, I am trying in various ways to make sure that both sides — ours and the PA's — implement and adhere to the commitments that have been agreed upon.

As for the personal level — "meeting with 'Arafat" — I believe things were exaggerated. I will not hide from you, however, that there are no significant channels of

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communication at present with 'Arafat. I am looking for such channels, as well as for direct contacts.

I have emphasized one point, and that is that we should not find it difficult to understand each other. I believe this is actually the case.

[AL-QUDS] If Israel really wants to establish peace with the Palestinians, that desire totally conflicts with some of the issues that come up daily and which we, the Palestinians, cannot explain. Each day, we are faced with humiliating operations by the Israeli security people. Their practices impact on the Palestinian people at all levels — ordinary people and officials who are expected to conduct a special social life. For example, Mahmud 'Abbas, alias Abu-Mazin, a senior Palestinian official who is considered one of the figures who played a central role in the peace process, was prevented from crossing the Erez checkpoint and going to the West Bank. A week ago, the commander of the Hebron police and those accompanying him were attacked by an army patrol. Such incidents occur on a daily basis. In the light of these practices, how is it possible to convince the ordinary Palestinian citizen that Israel is really seeking a peace based on justice and equality?

[Netanyahu] What you have described is not a government policy. If such things really occurred, they are totally incompatible with our policy. I will demand an investigation into the two incidents you mentioned. I will also demand from all the officials and officers concerned to deal with the Palestinians with respect. In the past, I heard about complaints about incidents such as those you mentioned, but I did not know they still occur.

[AL-QUDS] I did not mean that these practices started during your term. They are old practices that have been going on for a long time.

[Netanyahu] The important thing is that we must change this situation. I know that the terrorist operations necessitated search operations by the security forces. I am also aware of the fact that people who have no relation to terrorism are the subject of the great majority of these search operations. At the same time, however, I believe that the search operations must be conducted in a proper, respectful, and not humiliating manner. I and the defense minister will ensure that the people concerned adhere to these instructions.

[AL-QUDS] The standard of living of the Palestinian citizens is continuously deteriorating as a result of the ongoing closure and the fact that the Palestinians are prevented from working in Israel. Naturally, this affects the Palestinians' psychological state and their acceptance of the peace process. Do you intend to adopt measures to ease this closure and improve the climate?

[Netanyahu] I completely agree with you. Therefore, we started to ease the security closure, and we are seeking to improve the day- to-day situation of the Palestinians. Two weeks ago, we allowed an additional 10,000 workers to enter Israel. This week, we granted permits to another 5,000, even though we experienced the terrorist attack near Bet Shemesh. In the wake of this attack, we closed the territories but for a temporary period that did not exceed 48 hours because we felt that there was no security justification for the continuation of the closure.

All of that clearly indicates that we are following an open-door policy and that we seek to make the Palestinians' lives not only more bearable but comfortable. I believe that we have to exert greater efforts in order to speed up the process of establishing joint industrial areas. We have other ideas that we are trying to realize in order to help bring about a concrete improvement in the economic situation of the Palestinians. For us, this is a policy and not mere talk.

When I speak with Arab leaders, I inform them honestly and clearly about all that has been agreed upon, all the issues about which we have adopted decisions, and the issues on which we disagree. I tell them: Let us stress the positive issues. I want joint economic projects with the Palestinians. I want mutual trade, and I want to remove the obstacles facing this. I want to do this not through international conferences which have media attraction or through pompous declarations and statements. I want to do this through direct daily contact between the Palestinians and the Israelis. I want to establish real peace. There may be disagreements and, naturally, there will be disagreements, especially about issues related to the Palestinian entity and issues related to borders and land. The Palestinians will demand more and we will offer less than what they want. We do not have agreement on these issues at present, but I believe that after several years of living together and cooperating on the economic and humanitarian levels, it will be easier to solve these issues.

[AL-QUDS] Let us now move to the issue of Jerusalem. Israel has kept the world occupied in recent days with the issue of Deputy Hatim 'Abd-al-Qadir's office and Orient House activities. Israel considers these issues a violation of the agreements. If such matters are a violation of the agreements, what can one say about the expansion of Jewish construction in East Jerusalem and the confiscation of land? Is that not a grave violation of the agreements?

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[Netanyahu] There is no possibility that we will agree with the PA on the final status of Jerusalem. It seems that Jerusalem is one of the issues that cannot be solved. There is an agreement, however, that stipulates that at this stage — the interim stage — the PA pledges to refrain from conducting any activities involving officials or employees of the PA in the city. As for the issue of 'Abd-al-Qadir, this was a clear violation of the agreement. He clearly announced that he intends to open an office in Jerusalem. This is something that contravenes the Oslo agreements. Therefore, I stressed the need to adhere to this pledge. This is not mere talk; we mean this. We expect the commitments stipulated in the agreements to be fulfilled, and we also expect the same of ourselves.

There are many issues not dealt with in the interim agreements. We do not seek to postpone or suspend the process; on the contrary, we want to speed it up and lay it out in detail. If all the officials in the PA were to understand this, it would be easier for the two sides to move the process forward. We intend to move forward and not backward. We have no intention of freezing issues or deceiving the other side. We seek the active implementation of the agreements. The opening of PA offices in Jerusalem violates the agreements and, therefore, they must be closed down.

[AL-QUDS] Yes, but these violations, as you call them, are minor matters compared with the confiscations and building of roads that you are conducting....

[Netanyahu] The Oslo agreement does not impose any restrictions on this. There may be disagreements between us about the form of the final arrangement, but Oslo.... I, perhaps, am among those who are most concerned about and read the Oslo agreements from beginning to the end. I cannot say that it was a joyous experience for me, because there are many things in Oslo about which I disapprove.... I have clearly said that the previous government adopted decisions and committed itself to agreements, and I will also adhere to them. "Oslo" makes no reference whatsoever to the settlements. We have decided for ourselves, however, that we will not move on the settlement level except in terms of the natural growth which we have discussed. There is no binding commitment in the Oslo agreements that stipulates that Israel is banned from building a road or neighborhood. We decide whether it is necessary to build a road. As for Oslo, it does not contain any restrictions in this regard.

[AL-QUDS] But the Oslo agreement also stipulates that the two sides should refrain from any acts that might affect the final stage of negotiations and prejudice the other side.

[Netanyahu] We can assemble 500 attorneys or any number of attorneys you wish — and I am personally acquainted with many attorneys — and we will find out that each one has his own interpretation of this article. The Oslo agreements contain a clear article, however, stipulating the ban of governmental activities by the PA in Jerusalem, and there is only one interpretation of this article. In other words, we must fulfill our commitments, and this applies to both sides.

As for roads and the expansion of Jewish neighborhoods, there is no article in the Oslo agreements barring this, and there is no article about the settlements. But, as you said, the government has adopted decisions in this regard, and it is committed to them.

[AL-QUDS] I repeat that these practices are considered prejudicial against the other side and will have a negative impact on the final stage talks.

[Netanyahu] Life goes on, and we cannot freeze it. The negotiations with the PA will continue for a long time. There are negotiations on the violations committed by the two sides during the interim stage. We must also conclude the negotiations on this stage, and then we have to start and conclude the negotiations on the final stage. It will take several years for us to agree on these issues, and we cannot bring life to a halt during this interim period. I cannot tell Palestinian villages and towns: Do not build, do not expand because, by doing so, you are creating a new reality before the final agreement has been reached. In fact, they are doing this. Such is life. I will not try to suffocate them, and I will not tell them: Do not get married, multiply, or set up families; do not build schools and hospitals; and do not build roads. In fact, most of the bypass roads that were approved serve not only the Jews but also the Arabs. I do no mean that they serve them by creating work for them but rather that they make it easier for them to reach their destination. If we act on the assumption that each house or road that is built creates a new reality, we will have to enforce this with regard to both sides, Arab and Jewish alike.

This is not the right way. We will have enough time to negotiate and discuss — I hope we will agree — but we cannot freeze the lives of Jews and Palestinians in the territories. This is impossible. All we can do is act in a good spirit and with good intentions in this regard. I am right, and I am handling this issue with good intentions.

[AL-QUDS] At the press conference you held following your visit to Jordan, one of the correspondents asked you about the fact that the Israeli Interior Ministry has recently withdrawn the identity cards of Jerusalemites who reside abroad, even though they left the country with official permits, and is currently withdrawing the

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identity cards of those Jerusalemites who reside outside the city. You said that only forged identity cards are being withdrawn.

[Netanyahu] Do you mean that someone who travels to Ramallah or Amman loses his identity card!?

[AL-QUDS] Yes.

[Netanyahu] How do they confiscate the identity cards?

[AL-QUDS] When someone goes to the Interior Ministry for travel permits or other reasons, the cards are taken away and not returned.

[Netanyahu] How long has this been going on?

[AL-QUDS] For 10 months. In the past, any Jerusalemite could leave the city for three years or stay outside the city without any problem.

[Netanyahu] In fact, this is only the second time I hear of this. I have not had the opportunity to study it yet, and I will do so soon, perhaps this week.

[AL-QUDS] Forgive me, Mr. Netanyahu, but I repeat and stress that you said during your press conference in Amman that only forged identity cards are being withdrawn from their owners.

[Netanyahu] I was not aware of all the details of this problem. All that I knew was what was published in the Israeli papers about the forgery and sale of identity cards. As to what you are talking about now, this is something totally different, and I must study it.

[AL-QUDS] Let us continue to talk about the Palestinians' problems. Perhaps the most important one is the ban on Arab construction in Jerusalem. Since 1967, tens of thousands of housing units were built for Jews in East Jerusalem. They currently number over 150,000 in the eastern part while, at the same time, the Arabs are not allowed to build more than several hundred housing units. Don't the Arab citizens deserve to be treated the same as the Jews?

[Netanyahu] This cannot be true. Hundreds of housing units since 1967?

[AL-QUDS] Let us say 2,000 or 3,000. The gap is still very large, and it is very difficult to obtain building permits.

[Netanyahu] In any case, I would like to explain my policy toward the city. I believe that we must follow one policy toward all the city's residents: Arabs and Jews. I also believe that similar municipal services must be given. I believe we should allow adequate building expansion for the Arabs in the city. Moreover, I believe that the law must be applied in the same way on both the Arab and the Jewish sides. I believe that Jerusalem must be a united city in fact, with one municipality and one way of treating the Arabs and the Jews. This is the policy that must be implemented in the city. I have discussed this with Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert. I stressed to him the need to develop the Arab neighborhoods.

[AL-QUDS] I know that the time allotted us has ended, but I hope you will answer another question.

[Netanyahu] Please.

[Al-QUDS] Your opposition to the establishment of a Palestinian state is known. Do you believe, however, that your position may change in the light of new circumstances?

[Netanyahu] We play a game of words and phrases. The word state means many things. For example, I discussed this issue with left-wing Israelis, and I told them that the disagreement between us is not big. They asked: Why? I told them it is because you and we want the same thing, which is to see the Palestinians running their affairs with the maximum freedom possible. I asked: Does this mean that the Palestinians will have a big army with tanks and artillery? They immediately said: No. I asked them: Does this mean that giving the Palestinians the chance to establish a military alliance with Iraq or Iran, for example? They answered: Of course not. And so on....

These people told me that they want the Palestinians to have a state but that this state must be unarmed. They said: We want a state, but with conditions.

I am simply more confident on this issue. I say that I do not want to govern the Arab Palestinians in the territories, and I do not want to run their lives or control them. I want them to run their affairs by themselves, establish their institutions and elect their representatives — all that with maximum freedom. At the same time, however, I want to reach an arrangement that will safeguard the Israeli spirit as a people and Israel as a state. I believe that the balance between these two things can be achieved through the arrangement we term self-rule, and it might be a very extended self-rule. The important thing is that the Arab Palestinians will ultimately be able to run their lives with freedom and dignity, while everything relating to control of security will remain in our hands, and we will be guaranteed the continued survival of the Jewish state.

We cannot solve this problem within days. The negotiations were suspended many times because there were attempts to determine the characteristics of the negotiations and impose certain viewpoints before they began. I face this problem now with the Syrians. They are try to impose on me the form according to which

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these negotiations will be conducted before the negotiations start. The same problem impeded the negotiations track between us and the PA. I propose that we remove these obstacles. I truly respect the fact that there are various interpretations and that the desire of the other side differs from what I want at the end of the negotiations. This is natural, and this is the reason why there are negotiations. But can one say that I believe that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict cannot be solved? Of course not. I believe that it is possible to reach peace and that there will be give-and-take on both sides. May I tell you something that I long for and desire: I want a Palestinian entity alongside the Hebrew state — an entity in this or that form, with extensive powers or with fewer powers. I want the relations between us to be open. I do not seek a Palestinian entity that is closed within itself, shut off to mutual trade and economics, and without contacts between the two sides. This is the last thing that I want, and I believe that it would be bad both for you and for peace. I want an open door and a continuous lessening of the tension between us.

[Al-QUDS] Last question: Do you have an adviser for Arab affairs to inform you about the real suffering of the Palestinians?

[Netanyahu] Yes, I have more than one. In fact, I wish I had enough time to study Arabic. Perhaps during the second or third year of my term, I will start to learn Arabic, the Palestinian dialect.

Israel: Netanyahu Briefs Correspondents on Talks With Syria, PA

TA1208193296 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 12 Aug 96

[News conference by Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu with unidentified Palestinian and Arab correspondents in Jerusalem on 12 August — recorded, in English with Arabic subtitles; transcribed from the English]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] [Netanyahu] If I may say to Arab journalists, I find myself in a Kafkaesque position where I, the prime minister of Israel, says that I want to leave the territory of an Arab country, and I am being told not to leave it by Syria and by the government of Lebanon. I think that this is one area that we could productively begin with — I don't say begin and end with — begin with in order to build trust, in order to pacify what is now an inflammation that is escalating all the time from 1991. Escalation is bad: It's bad for Syria, it's bad for Lebanon, it's bad for Israel, it's bad for peace, and no one knows where it could lead. I want to de-escalate, I want to restore tranquility, I want to restore security, and we want to get ou' of Lebanon.

[Correspondent] If you can brief us on the position of the Israeli Government vis-a-vis the Palestinian offices operating in Jerusalem?

[Netanyahu] Oslo is very, very clear about it. It doesn't leave any interpretation, and there are two.... [pauses] Actually, there is a larger number of installations that we could define as PA [Palestinian Authority] offices. I told our people: Reduce all of that. I don't want anything in the gray area. I want it black and white, so remove all the things that are in between. Those Palestinian institutions that are not governmental or are not PA, they are not interesting. Philanthropic and otherwise, we accept it. We believe there should be Palestinian institutions, obviously, that are not governmental or political. Secondly, those that are in the gray area, leave them as well. But those that are obviously, indisputably PA offices — they have to be closed. So we narrowed down the list to three, and we presented the PA this list of offices. It's a very short list. And we said: This is something that we insist on.

[Correspondent] Taking more land for settlements, changing the demographic position, and then, what to negotiate about?

[Netanyahu] We decided to relax the formal constraints that the previous government had placed that were not very effective in any case. We have not yet decided on the question of new settlements. We have not yet decided on the question of roads. In any case, according to Oslo, there is no obstruction in the interim phase. It is a fact that even under the Labor government, the existing settlements continued to grow.

[Correspondent, in Arabic] Answering a question regarding the Hebron redeployment and the resumption of the talks with the PA, Mr. Netanyahu said the following:

[Netanyahu, in Hebrew] We will hold contacts with the PA after we finalize our position in the next few days. This is a complicated and difficult problem. Our policy is to implement the agreement while safeguarding security, and this requires a cautious and sober approach, and I hope a similar approach will also be taken by the PA. Hebron is not merely an Israeli problem. If we act rashly and lose control and there are terror attacks and perhaps even bloodshed on both sides, this will destroy the entire peace process. Therefore, I believe that, in this case, haste is really ill-advised.

[Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew at 1700 GMT on 12 August carries a similar report on Netanyahu's news conference, adding the following remarks by Netanyahu in English: "I am not a believer in closure. I am not an advocate of closure.

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Closure is not an instrument of punishment. Closure is an instrument of security. To the extent that we can we alleviate the suffering of the Palestinians, I don't think that a Palestinian child in Qalqilyah — if there is no overbearing security problem — should suffer because of a policy."

[Asked whether Israel would consider territorial compromise on the Golan Heights, Netanyahu says: "Let me throw the question back at you: Are there certain conditions under which Syria would agree to territorial compromise on the Golan Heights? Al-Asad says he wants all of the Golan Heights; I say I want all of the Golan Heights. This is how we enter the negotiations. What will come out at the end I don't know."

[On the issue of settlements, Netanyahu says: "The question of new settlements is something that will be considered by the government as a whole; it will not be decided by the prime minister and the defense minister or by any individual minister. It will be decided — if it is decided — by the government as a whole."

[Later in the newscast, anchor Hayim Yavin reads the following announcement in Hebrew: "The prime minister's spokesman requests to clarify that even though each of the sides is entitled to bring to the negotiations its own positions, Israel's position on the Golan Heights is clear and unequivocal — namely, that Israel must remain on all of the Golan Heights."]

Israel: Netanyahu 'Does Not Rule Out' Negotiations on Golan

TA1308075396 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 13 Aug 96 p 2

[Report by Hemi Shalev and Ben Kaspit]

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu has informed the United States that "he does not rule out" negotiations with Syria about the future of the Golan Heights, politic[illegible]ources in Jerusalem said last night.

A senior political source in the prime minister's bureau told MA'ARIV: "The prime minister never said that he is opposed to a withdrawal from the Golan or that he will not cede an inch of the Golan. His speeches have been very similar to those made by the late Rabin. We are prepared to discuss everything, including the Golan. Of course, we have no intention of ceding all of it, but on the other hand, we have no preconditions either."

Netanyahu hinted at his position in a meeting with Arab journalists in Jerusalem yesterday. Asked whether he was ready for "a territorial compromise" on the Golan, he replied: "First check with President al-Asad to see if he is ready for a territorial compromise on the Golan, and then get back to me."

Netanyahu made it clear to the Americans that Israel's opening position is to oppose any territorial concession on the Golan. Nevertheless, he said he was not ruling out negotiations about the Golan and would be willing to engage in such negotiations, if the Syrians prove that they seriously intend to reach full peace with Israel.

At this point, the Israeli formula for getting Syria back to the negotiating table is to resume the negotiations on all issues, with Lebanon being the first item on the agenda.

As MA'ARIV reported a week ago, the Israeli formula is "Lebanon first, the Golan Heights later." In other words, negotiations would resume at Wye Plantation without any preconditions and with all issues included in the agenda. Lebanon would be at the top of the agenda and would be discussed first.

According to sources in Jerusalem, there would be no problem reaching a rapid arrangement on Lebanon and immediately afterward proceed to discuss the other issues, including the future of the Golan Heights.

Israel: GSC Criticizes Netanyahu Remarks on Golan Heights

TA1308095296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 13 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Golan Settlements Committee [GSC] says that Prime Minister Netanyahu does not have a mandate to make concessions on the Golan Heights, adding that hints regarding a willingness to reach a compromise are uncalled for, harmful, and weaken Israel's position in the negotiations. The GSC statement was given to our correspondent Ilan Ro'e after reports yesterday and this morning on remarks made by the prime minister and his associates regarding the Golan Heights issue.

Shay Bazaq, the prime minister's media adviser, this morning said that Binyamin Netanyahu's position is that Israel should remain on the Golan Heights.

Earlier today, Knesset Member 'Uzi Landau, the chairman of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, said that before the elections Netanyahu made it clear that the Israeli-Syrian border would pass through the Golan Heights [baGolan].

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Israel: Mordekhay Approves Placement of 300 Trailers in Settlements

TA1208185696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1800 GMT 12 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Defense Minister Yitzhaq Mordekhay has approved a new procedure intended to promote the processes involved in approving construction plans in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza, in the framework of implementing the cabinet decision on ending the freeze on construction in the settlements. No details were given about the procedure, but it was learned that Minister Mordekhay has approved the placement of about 300 trailers in the Jewish settlements in Judaea and Samaria. About one-third of the trailers will be placed in educational institutes, one-third in Hashomron College in Ari'el, and another third in various public institutes in the settlements. Our correspondent Karmela Menashe has learned that the defense minister approved the positioning of the trailers at a meeting which took place in his office today, in preparation for the new school year. Our correspondent notes that according to the cabinet decision, the defense minister is in charge of approving construction plans and issuing permits to position trailers in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza.

Israel: Mordekhay Rejects Settlers Demand for More Houses, Trailers

TA1308111996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 13 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Political sources in Jerusalem say that Defense Minister Yitzhaq Mordekhay has rejected a settler demand to approve the construction of thousands of housing units in the settlements. Political sources also told our political correspondent Shlomo Raz that the defense minister approved less than one third of the trailers demanded by the settlers — and these too are slated for special needs such as schoolrooms and public institutions.

Israel: Netanyahu Bypasses Levi, Orders IDF Ready for Oslo Collapse

TA1208182496 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 12 Aug 96

[Video report by political correspondent Dan Scemama]

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu has decided to renew the activity of all the joint Israeli-Palestinian committees. The prime minister's confidants say he will not wait for a resolution of the crisis with David Levi. Our political correspondent Dan Scemama brings more details:

[Begin Scemama recording] The prime minister has decided to build a new model for the negotiations with the Palestinians, a model that bypasses the steering committee or, rather, David Levi. In consultations he held in his bureau yesterday, it was decided that the process with the Palestinians should not be frozen any longer and that it is impossible for the process come to a halt because of an internal political conflict. As a result of this meeting, the defense minister today instructed the coordinator of activities in the territories to convene the joint Israeli-Palestinian Authority [PA] supreme civilian committee on 14 August. Jamil al-Tarifi heads the Palestinian side on this committee. On 15 August, the joint PA-Israeli defense establishment committee will also convene. This committee will discuss the issue of the Dahaniyah airport south of Rafah. At the end of this week, the defense minister will present his new plan for the Hebron redeployment to the prime minister and the political kitchen members. Mordekhay will probably meet with 'Arafat at the end of next week. In yesterday's consultations it was decided that the joint Israeli-PA economic committee will also be convened soon. To this end, Finance Minister Dan Meridor will shortly meet with Muhammad Zuhdi al-Nashashibi, the person in charge of the finance portfolio in the PA.

Thus, 50 days after the establishment of the government, Foreign Minister David Levi and National Infrastructure Minister Ari'el Sharon are on a private visit in New York, while the prime minister is launching a dialogue with the Palestinians on all levels. There is no steering committee but, in fact, the prime minister has positioned himself at the head of the negotiations with the Palestinians. [end recording]

[Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew at 1700 GMT on 12 August carries a similar report, adding that while giving the green light to the resumption of the talks with the Palestinians, "the prime minister instructed the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] to prepare plans for military activity inside the West Bank towns in the event of the collapse or a flagrant violation of the Oslo accords."]

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Jordan: King Husayn Returns From Saudi Arabia, Speaks to Reporters

JN1208171196 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1530 GMT 12 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] With God's care and providence, His Majesty King Husayn returned home a short while ago following a visit to the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, during which he met with his brother King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz of Saudi Arabia, custodian of the two holy mosques, and senior Saudi officials. Talks dealt with bilateral relations and ways of promoting them, the peace process, and the latest regional developments.

Upon his return to the homeland, his majesty told reporters:

[Begin recording] [Husayn] I am happy to have this opportunity to meet with the brothers and sisters, representatives of the local and world media. I have just returned from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, where I was accorded a warm, fraternal reception yesterday and today by my brother his majesty the custodian of the two holy mosques, His Highness Crown Prince 'Abdallah, Prince Sultan, the ruling family, the government, and people. Our meetings were useful. We discussed all bilateral issues as well as topics related to the region, the future, and our responsibilities toward generations to come. Viewpoints were identical and the results were good, praise be to God. Now, we are on our way back. We were happy to visit Medina. God be praised, for this opportunity which we were given once again. I would like to express to all my brothers my appreciation, thanks, and gratitude for the great hospitality I and the accompanying delegation were accorded. We meet this hospitality with gratitude and determination to make relations between us exemplary and fraternal all the time — relations whose objective is to serve the Arab nation and the two peoples of the one country, the two fraternal countries. Yes, please my brother.

[Unidentified correspondent] Your Majesty, regarding the economic aspect of this visit, was it agreed to take steps to improve the conditions of the Jordanian workforce in the Saudi labor market and to facilitate the movement of citizens between the two countries?

[Husayn] All these issues were discussed by me and by the brother officials with their counterparts. All the results were positive, encouraging, and satisfactory, thanks be to God.

[Al-Silawi] Your Majesty, Sa'd al-Silawi from MBC, my question is: Did you discuss with the custodian of the two holy mosques the Israeli position and the peace process, especially since your majesty recently met with the Israeli prime minister in Amman?

[Husayn] Of course, I briefed the custodian of the two holy mosques and the brothers on all that is new, on all that I know. There is no doubt that there is a general feeling in the entire region that it is necessary to press ahead to complete what remains along the path of a comprehensive and just solution and a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

[Unidentified correspondent] Your Majesty, did you discuss security issues, especially since Saudi Arabia was the target of terrorist operations? Is there a security cooperation agreement between Jordan and Saudi Arabia regarding security issues?

[Husayn] Concerning this dimension too, we believe that what threatens Saudi Arabia threatens us, and vice versa. Therefore, we cooperate in this domain with our utmost capabilities.

['Abd-al-Rahman] Your Majesty, 'Imad 'Abd-al-Rahman from AL-ASWAQ newspaper, strenuous efforts are being made by the Arab leaders to resume the Middle East peace process. Can your majesty brief us on the latest developments, and are there any positive developments in this respect?

[Husayn] First of all, we seek to be one nation and united throughout the big Arab homeland. We hope that harmony, accord, and cooperation will prevail among us all. This is a great duty which we should actually fulfill at the highest level of responsibility across the big homeland. Concerning the issue of peace, all that I have to say is that we reached a certain point and that all the parties are committed to what was achieved thus far. These parties seek to build further within the context of the serious drive to accomplish a comprehensive peace.

[Al-Rawashidah] Your Majesty, Ramadan al-Rawashidah from AL-RA'Y newspaper, regarding economic issues between Jordan and Saudi Arabia, did you discuss Saudi Arabia supplying Jordan with oil?

[Husayn] I believe there was a need to discuss this issue at this stage. However, we can say that Saudi Arabia supports this country with its utmost energy and in all fields.

[Al-Hajj] Your Majesty, Hamdan al-Hajj from AL-DUSTUR newspaper, there was a call by the custodian of the two holy mosques to open the Jerusalem file, did you discuss this topic?

[Husayn] Our position on Jerusalem is clear. The issues of the region cannot be debated away from the issue of Jerusalem. Opinions should be exchanged regarding

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this topic, which is important for all of us. Thank you all. [end recording]

Jordan: King Husayn Sends Cable of Thanks to Saudi King Fahd

JN1208191196 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 12 Aug 96

["Text" of a cable from King Husayn of Jordan to Saudi King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz on 12 August — read by announcer]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. Your Majesty King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz of Saudi Arabia, custodian of the two holy mosques, may God protect you. May God's peace, mercy, and blessings be upon you.

While leaving your dear country, I and my accompanying delegation are pleased to convey to you, as well as to all members of the honorable Saudi ruling family, our best regards and most sincere wishes of continued good health, happiness, and success. I express to his majesty my dear brother my thanks and deep appreciation for the good hospitality you accorded us, which expresses the genuineness of your people and embodies the deep-rooted fraternal relations that developed over the years.

While I express my deep appreciation for the fraternal relations between our two peoples and for the intimate and distinguished relations between our two families, I assert to your majesty our constant eagerness to promote, entrench, and safeguard these relations against any defect that may plague them. I beseech Almighty God to preserve and grant you continued good health and take good care of your sisterly country.

[Signed] Your brother, King Husayn.

Jordan: Country Reportedly Offers Anti-Terror Help to Saudi Arabia

JN1208205596 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 2000 GMT 12 Aug 96

[Report by Randah Habib in Amman from the "Panorama" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Jordanian Monarch King Husayn asserted that his meeting with the Saudi Monarch King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz was useful and encouraging. He described the Jordanian-Saudi ties as ideal.

In statements to reporters on his return to Amman, King Husayn added that he discussed with King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz all bilateral issues, as well as issues that concern the region and its future. He added that they also discussed developments in the peace process and the need to forge ahead to complete the march toward a comprehensive and just peace in the region.

King Husayn said that Jordan and Saudi Arabia are cooperating in the area of security. He asserted that whatever threatens Saudi Arabia is a threat to Jordan, and vice versa.

A responsible source stated that Jordan expressed its willingness to provide all the expertise it possesses to Saudi Arabia and to exchange information with it to curb the phenomenon of terrorism from which Saudi Arabia has recently suffered.

The meeting between King Husayn and King Fahd was the first since the Gulf crisis that erupted six years ago and caused a rift in bilateral ties. Amman sees this meeting as the crowning of the reconciliation efforts between the two countries and the heralding of a new era in ties between Amman and Riyadh.

In a separate development, the government decided to increase bread prices as of Tuesday [13 August] by nearly three times the current price after a heated debate on the issue in the Jordanian Parliament. By so doing, the Jordanian Government changed the indirect bread subsidies into direct subsidies that will take the form of cash compensations for all Jordanians for the change in prices.

Jordan: Information Minister on King's Visit to Saudi Arabia, Other Issues

JN1308105496 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 13 Aug 96 p 8

[Report by Hani al-Duwayk in Amman]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Information Minister Dr. Marwan al-Mu'ashshir said that His Majesty King Husayn's visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia crowned the efforts made by the two parties over the past five years and fully closed the chapter on the type of relations during that time. He added that the visit also marks the beginning of a new chapter between the two fraternal countries on all levels.

During the Monday [13 August] press encounter with the local, Arab, and foreign news media, Dr. al-Mu'ashshir said: In the political field, there is full agreement between the Jordanian and Saudi sides regarding the peace process. Economic relations are also very important, particularly regarding fruit and vegetable exports to the large Saudi market, and so is transportation.

He noted that positive developments took place following His Majesty's visit to Saudi Arabia in opening the Saudi market to Jordanian laborers. Since the beginning

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of the year, contracts have been signed with approximately 3,000 Jordanian laborers to work in Saudi Arabia, in addition to the government's efforts to open the other Gulf markets to Jordanian laborers, he added.

Regarding the political moves, contacts, and consultations in the Middle East and the world states, as well as the role of Jordanian diplomacy, which is led by His Majesty King Husayn in the peace process, and his majesty's meetings with the Egyptian, Syrian, and Palestinian presidents, and with the Israeli prime minister, the information minister said that they are all aimed at resuming Arab-Israeli negotiations on all tracks and going beyond Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's election statements and requirements. He stressed that the mechanism of developing the Likud-led Israeli Government's stand can only be achieved through negotiations.

He added: The political moves in the wake of the big challenges that emerged following the arrival of the formation of the Likud government, the confusion in the region following the "Operation Grapes of Wrath," and the military operations, are all aimed at paving the way for the resumption of the negotiations after the elimination of all obstacles and hurdles. Jordan uses its relations with all sides to bring viewpoints closer together.

Regarding the water issue, he noted that there are positive signs at the current negotiations with the Israeli side that include searching for additional sources to secure approximately 50 million cubic meters of water in addition to the 50 million cubic meters Jordan gets in accordance with the peace treaty between the two sides, noting that there is another stage at which Jordan will get no less than 50 million cubic meters from the al-Yarmuk and Jordan Rivers after building a series of small and large dams on them at a cost of $400-500 million. He said talks are being held with some countries, particularly Germany, to execute this project.

Dr. al-Mu'ashshir pointed out that an agreement was reached with Syria on reviving the joint water committee between the two fraternal countries and that the committee will meet soon to discuss unresolved issues, such as the al-Yarmuk water issue. [passage omitted]

Jordan: JORDAN TIMES Editorial Views Renewing Ties With Saudi Arabia

JN1308092296 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 13 Aug 96 p 6

[Editorial: "Landmark Visit"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] As the challenges facing the Arab Nation mount to a point where closer cooperation and coordination among all Arab states become a necessity, the visit which His Majesty King Husayn concluded to Saudi Arabia yesterday and the talks he held with King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz come to reflect the two leaders' understanding of the need to put all differences aside and work together to secure a better future for their countries and the rest of the region.

It is obvious that Jordanian-Saudi relations have come a long way since they were strained by the different stands the two countries took on the Gulf war. Relations have improved slowly but steadily since 1990. The slow pace of reconciliation indicates that the two sides have addressed all points of contention to ensure that current and future ties will be based on solid and clear foundations.

Full restoration of ties is for the benefit of the whole Arab World and for peace and stability in the whole region. Efforts should thus be encouraged to put inter-Arab relations back on track and within an institutionalised framework that recognises the different but confluent interests of individual Arab states.

On the bilateral front, Jordan and Saudi Arabia can cooperate on a number of issues ranging from trade and economics to security and shared strategic concerns. The opening of the markets of the two states to the labour and goods of each other makes a great deal of economic sense. Saudi Arabia has a large market that can help — and benefit from — both qualified Jordanian labour and certain exports that can fill the need of the Saudi market with competitive prices. So can Jordan absorb many Saudi products which can be sold here at prices lower than those offered by other producers. Closer economic cooperation between Jordan and Saudi Arabia offers a clear case for mutual benefits.

So can the two states ensure a better and more secure life for their peoples if they work together to face the many security challenges that have started to threaten the region. The Kingdom and Saudi Arabia have long borders that cannot be secured without the cooperation of the two. Many drug lords have started to eye the Saudi market and have tried to penetrate it through the Jordanian border. Jordan has aborted many of these efforts. But complete success in eliminating the problem can only be attained if Jordanian and Saudi security officials can cooperate without any political constraints or restraints.

The threat of terrorism also is a joint problem that calls for the pooling of all available resources to thwart. Jordan has enough expertise in dealing with this threat and Saudi Arabia, which is facing more security challenges, can benefit from the Kingdom's experience in this regard. Jordan has repeatedly warned that terrorism is a plague that must be fought with vigour and determination and has offered to cooperate with all states to combat it. A joint Jordanian-Saudi initiative to

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stand up to terrorism will definitely make a difference in that joint battle.

King Husayn told reporters upon arrival home from Saudi Arabia that his talks with King Fahd covered all issues of mutual interest. The results of these talks, the King said, are positive and encouraging.

That is good news, not just for Jordan and Saudi Arabia but for all those who rightly believe in the viability of joint Arab action.

Jordan: Government Announces Increase in Bread Prices

JN1308064896 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 13 Aug 96 p 1

[By Tariq al-Mumani]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman — The government on Monday [12 August] announced increases in the prices of bread as part of a move to remove subsidies for wheat in line with the Kingdom's economic restructuring programme while also extending cash compensation for Jordanians to offset the increase.

The increases were announced by Minister of Supply Munir Subar in a statement carried by the Jordan News Agency, PETRA.

Mr. Subar said Arabic bread produced from Jordanian wheat would be sold at 180 fils per kilogramme. Bread produced from a mixture of Jordanian and imported wheat will be sold at 220 fils a kilogramme and that made wholly from imported wheat at 250 fils a kilogramme.

Prior to the increases, which go into immediate effect, the three types of bread were at 85 fils, 120 fils and 150 fils respectively per kilogramme.

The government has already announced cash compensation of JD 1.28 per month for every Jordanian to offset the increase.

The government announcement of the increase in prices as an administrative decision came after the executive and legislative authorities could not reach agreement on the issue.

A special committee set up by the Lower House of Parliament proposed two options but both were turned down by the government since they did not meet the basic objective of removal of subsidies and cutting government expenditure.

A 24-member group in the 80-seat Lower House has declared open opposition to the move and is insisting on boycotting Parliament sessions.

The group insists that the Jordan Television screen to the public the full speeches that its members made during last Monday's session in which they aired their views against the government's subsidy plans.

Efforts on Monday to persuade these deputies to change their mind and attend Wednesday's [14 August] session failed and the group's members were reported to have turned down an offer by House Speaker Sa'd Hayil al-Surur to end their boycott of the sessions in exchange for an address by one of the group in Parliament on Wednesday clarifying their position with regard to their demand that last Monday's session to be televised in full, according to parliamentary sources.

In Wednesday's session deputies are scheduled to vote on the recommendations submitted to the government by the special parliamentary committee offering alternatives to the government's plans according to these sources.

The 24-member group not only voiced their rejection of these plans but also demanded that the House speaker ban Jordan Television cameras' access into the House in accordance with Article 83 of Parliament's internal regulations which call for the accurate relay of deliberations and authorise the speaker to take appropriate measures against any media outlet that distort the House's deliberations.

The special committee chairman, Samir al-Habashinah, said that he had asked the 24-member group to attend Wednesday's session in order to approve of the committee's proposals to the government.

"The committee presented its view and discussed the situation and asked the group to reconsider their stand," added Mr. al-Habashinah.

Meanwhile, a parliamentary source who preferred anonymity said: "Protests against Jordan Television's failure to screen all the speeches should not be transformed into a general boycott of the House's sessions. The boycott is nothing but an escape from facing the realities."

"A boycott could disrupt the session because there would not be a quorum for the meeting which might consequently give the government an excuse to terminate the current extraordinary session," added the source.

The source said: "It was not the government that requested an extraordinary session but rather 46 deputies who signed a formal request for it. Therefore deputies should not be the party to obstruct the convening of the sessions which are supposed to handle draft laws," added the source.

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Informed government sources told the JORDAN TIMES the government's approach to the prices of bread aimed at stopping wastage and smuggling of bread, saving the treasury a significant amount and helping to stabilise the exchange rate of the Jordanian Dinar.

The government has stressed that each citizen will receive compensation for the differences in prices and had taken all the required procedures to ensure that this will be applied through the banks and the concerned government departments, the sources noted.

Islamic Action Front Deputy Hamzah Mansur Monday issued a statement on behalf of the 24-member group demanding that the government cover the deficit in the budget by stopping what he called financial corruption and retrieving "stolen funds" and through amending laws, which, he said, were enacted in order to favour the interests of "certain influential persons."

He also called on the special parliamentary committee to join the 24-member group and oppose the government's subsidy plans.

But committee member Nadir Zuhayrat made it clear that the committee's proposals were not binding on the government and said that the prime minister had explained to the committee the reasons behind the executive authorities' plan. He said that cooperation between the legislative and the executive authorities should continue to safeguard national interests.

The special parliamentary committee had suggested to the government to fix the bread prices at 130 fils a kilo, with the government paying compensation to the beneficiaries of the National Aid Fund or at 150 fils, with the government paying compensation to all those who hold food coupons allowing them to buy milk, rice and sugar at subsidised prices.

In reply the government offered to fix Arab bread price at 180 fils a kilo and all other kinds of bread at 220 fils and said it would provide bread free to the needy who receive aid from the National Aid Fund.

Among those who will be affected by the hike in prices are the estimated 400,000 non-Jordanian workers in the country as well as an estimated 1.3 million tourists, according to 1995 estimates.

Jordan: 'Official Source' Comments on Bread Proposals

JN1308081496 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 13 Aug 96 pp 1, 7

[By staff reporter P.V. Vivekanand]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman — Proposals made by a parliamentary committee would actually increase the amount of subsidy for bread instead of achieving the goal of removing subsidies and the government does not find any room for compromise over the issue, an official source said Monday [12 August].

Specific figures provided by the source on wheat consumption in Jordan and government estimates of actual expenditures based on various options showed that if the government were to accept the committee's proposals it would end up spending JD 20 million to JD 30 million in addition to the present annual subsidy of around JD 95 million on bread.

The figures derived by the special committee of the Lower House on the issue were not immediately available. It was also not known whether those figures matched those of the government.

But the source insisted that the government figures were based on methodical calculations and it was highly unlikely that anyone could challenge the figures.

The government and the parliamentary panel remain deadlocked over the issue of subsidy for bread, but Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti is expected to announce the increase in the price of bread and modifying the form of subsidy as an administrative decision.

The source, who did not want to be identified, pointed out that if the government set a price of 150 fils per kilogramme of bread and a direct cash compensation of JD 1.28 per head for every Jordanian as proposed by the panel, the actual cost to the treasury would be JD 113 million instead of the present JD 94.5 million.

Under another option, also tabled by the panel, of setting 130 fils per kilogramme and a JD 2.08 fils per head per month cash compensation to all beneficiaries of the National Aid Fund, the increase in expenditures will be about JD 30 million, the sources said.

The pertinent figures provided by the source, who said they were given by the Department of Statistics and the Central Bank, were:

— Jordan imports about 700,000 tonnes of wheat every year. World prices of wheat are about $200 to $225 per tonne. This means Pan [as published] average cost of 220 fils per kilogramme of bread in Jordan (including transport and processing costs).

— Given the present price of 85 fils per kilogramme of bread in Jordan, the government pays the difference — 135 fils per kilogramme (based on a cost price of 220 fils/kilogramme minus the present price of 85 fils/per kilogramme equal 135 fils), meaning a total of JD 94.5 million in subsidy per year.

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— Proposals of the special committee formed by the Lower House of Parliament include setting a new price of 150 fils per kilogramme and JD 1.28 per head cash per month compensation to all Jordanians.

Under such a system, the actual government cost would be more than the present subsidies, said the source.

The source noted that the share of government payment as difference (220 fils minutes 150 fils equal 70 fils) in international and local price of bread will be JD 49 million and the direct cash compensation will be JD 64 million, thus the total government burden would be JD 113 million.

"The government will end up spending nearly JD 20 million dinars over and above the amount of the subsidy it is paying now," noted the source. "So it defeats the whole purpose."

Another option proposed by the parliamentary panel is setting a price of 130 fils per kilogramme of bread and giving JD 2.08 per head per month as direct compensation to all beneficiaries of the National Aid Fund (NAF).

According to the source, this means the government will pay 90 fils per kilogramme as direct subsidy (220 fils minus 130 fils), meaning a total of JD 63 million, and another JD 63 million in cash compensation for 250,000 NAF beneficiaries (JD 2.08 X 250,000 X 12). The total cost to the treasury will be JD 126 million, an additional JD 31 million expenditure over the present subsidy amount.

"Both options are totally not feasible because they mean increased costs to the treasury in total contradiction of the objective of removing subsidies and reducing government expenditure," said the source.

The source rejected suggestions that the government could make up the difference by increasing customs duties on such items as vehicles, alcohol and electronic goods.

The government had already studied these options but found that the net increase in revenues through such hikes will be less than JD 5 million according to the source.

In any event, the government's key objective is to remove subsidies as part of the Kingdom's economic system and it is not willing to consider any compromise in this context, the source affirmed.

That meant the prime minister setting a price of 220 fils per kilogramme of quality bread and 180 fils per kilo for rough bread and JD 1.28 per month compensation to every Jordanian.

Under this option the total cost to the treasury would be around JD 60 to $65 million [figures as published], but the executive authority would achieve the key objective of removing subsidy for bread despite the slightly higher cost.

The government initially estimated that the total subsidy for rice, sugar, powdered milk and bread for fiscal year 1996 will be around JD 180 million. However, the amount spend in the first seven months of the year reached JD 160 million, raising serious fears that the actual cost for the year would be more than the projections.

The government has also removed subsidies on fodder but announced plans to compensate farmers through direct cash payments to those who deserve it under certain parametres.

The net reduction in expenditure as a result of the modifications in subsidies is expected to be around JD 70 million.

According to other sources, the government is not going to enter more negotiations on the price of bread with Parliament, which, officials say, can exercise its constitutional options to challenge the decision.

"We have had enough discussions and protracted debates over the issue," said an official source. "We tried our best to convince Parliament, but they (members of the special committee) were not willing to discuss things based on actual numbers and estimates."

"Parliament simply cannot insist on its demands without taking realities into consideration and leave the government with heavy financial burdens," added the source.

"The government will announce its administrative decision, and Parliament, if it is unhappy with the move, can adopt constitutional means to challenge it," said the source. "There is no transgression of democracy here. The government is exercising its executive prerogatives and the legislature can question it through the proper means."

"It is an irony," said the source. "Parliament has been consistently calling for reducing Jordan's external debts. But when the government adopts practical measures to achieve that goal, legislators cry foul and try to abort the move."

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Lebanon: Al-Hariri Announces Candidacy in Elections

NC1208134496 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1030 GMT 12 Aug 96

[Statement by Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri at a news conference in Beirut on 12 August—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen, brothers: About a month ago, journalists asked me if I had decided whether I was going to run in the elections. I promised to make my decision and announce it around 12 August. Today, I announce in your presence that I have decided to run in the parliamentary elections for the Bayrut constituency. [applause]

Previously, I refrained from running in the elections in order to preserve Beirut's unity. When I realized that refraining from running in the elections would not prevent splits, I decided to run in these elections in order to find decisions regarding Beirut and end the lack of such decisions, which have been absent for many years.

I am not the type of person who likes to make enemies or wants to be aloof or stand aside. I have always worked on uniting stands and opinions, and held consultations on decisions because I believe in democracy as our basis and main principle. So, it would be exemplary for this democracy to be practiced in Beirut, our capital, and then spread all over the homeland. Democracy and Lebanon are synonymous, exactly like the freedom we have worked to preserve, protect, and improve — freedom of opinion, speech, and choice, and the freedom of decision. However, in the final analysis, before it is too late, we have to make a decision to prevent us from losing the ability to retain this freedom.

The future of this city is in the balance today — its stability, growth, and prosperity, which means the stability, growth, and prosperity of the whole country. All kinds of self-confident people with potential are working to insure this stability; they believe in Beirut and are entrusted with the safe-keeping of a strong, independent, and prosperous homeland.

Dear brothers, throughout recent years I have been working to bolster national peace, close the chapter of the painful past, and restore an effective and operating political system through the establishment of government by institutions, to which our people aspire as their best bet for emerging from the situation of fragmentation and loss we have experienced. Today, I feel that we have won that bet. Rule by institutions has made quick and confident strides in our long march, a large part of which we have already finished. This is in fact one of the important achievements in our political life. Before us there is more effort and persistence to finish that accomplishment.

During the past four years, when the confidence of the Chamber of Deputies elevated me to the highest governmental responsibility and with the confidence of the president, I have eagerly tried to implement a large part of the construction program the Lebanese have been dreaming of.

Gentlemen, let me be frank with you, as I have always done. My experience in using executive authority from a position of responsibility has been very important in making me realize the difference between ideals and reality, between what is desired and what is possible, between planning and implementation. From the beginning, we had to rebuild the institutions that share the planning and undertake implementation. We also needed to cooperate with the Chamber of Deputies and its specialized committees to pass the laws and implement them.

And above all of this, our efforts continued on both the Arab and international levels to liberate our occupied land in the south and the western al-Biqa', implement Resolution 425, and get the Israeli enemy to withdraw to the internationally recognized borders. We always confirm this through coordination with our sister Syria, with whom we work to establish a just, comprehensive, and permanent peace. We have also worked on restoring our credibility and the people's confidence in us in order to acquire political and financial support for the reconstruction drive, for entrenching stability, and for our progress toward welcoming the 21st Century in a prepared and competent manner.

While I am convinced that you realize the realities and can tangibly feel the changes that have been made, I find it is my duty as a candidate who hopes to gain your representation in parliament to present you the accounts so that you can pass judgement on them. I will be very honest with you and tell you that I do not want to represent Beirut in parliament due to the size of this great city nor the extent of its aspirations. This is where I get my zeal to see that Beirut is the decisionmaking center, that this decision should be united and defended as a single entity, and that this decision should be for the good of this city, Beirut, which is dear to us all. [applause]

Lebanon's and Beirut's youths have always been my constant objective, because they are the hope and the future. I have focused my attention from the start on providing an opportunity for the promising young men and women from Beirut and all of Lebanon, not only to qualify them through the al-Hariri Foundation but also

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to prepare them to take over leadership in the state's administrative, economic, and political establishments. We have today an elite that is doing pioneering work in the fields of modernizing establishments, development, and overseeing the implementation of prospective projects. With the consolidation of stability and the growth of prosperity, many young men and women will become known in the fields of modern and advanced national construction.

O Beirutis, o Lebanese. There are two courses in political action for gaining legitimacy. The first depends on negativeness and neutrality in order to gain the citizens' trust, out of the belief of those who hold this view that this is the safest way to not make mistakes or errors. The second is the one of achievement, enterprise, and giving full account to the citizens and the constitutional establishments.

I have opted for the course of achievement, enterprise, and effectiveness from the start of my political career. I have shown the most important features of this career to the Lebanese in general, and the Beirutis in particular, during the past four years. This needs today the Beirutis' continuing and growing confidence in this course, so as to continue the process during the coming four years. They have never shirked in backing and supporting me.

I have read the electoral statements and manifestos that draw up the programs for this or that major national issue, such as sovereignty, freedom of decision, liberation of the national soil, and liberation of man. I believe in continuing the course I spoke of, through which I have dealt with basic issues such as these — which have become accepted precepts for the Lebanese. Focusing on these issues alone is not enough, because there must be action to have a strong state, effective establishments, and involvement in the political construction and development processes. Nations that are strong in their people, economy, productivity, and establishments are the ones that can confront major national issues without any undue clamor.

Ponder, o gentlemen, how we confronted the aggressions of 1993 and 1996 and you can see the difference between weakness and strength and between a weak homeland and a healthy and free one.

We will continue along the aforementioned course with the same achievements and same effectiveness and we will confront the occupation, decisionmaking, sovereignty, and independence issues.

Gentlemen. We have to hold municipal elections in Beirut in the coming few months. We want them in the future to be one of the main pillars of Beirut's renaissance and position as a decisionmaking center.

As to the appointment of a Mufti for Beirut and Lebanon, we are working to get the consensus of Muslims so as to achieve this. This will happen quite imminently.

We are bound to continue to sponsor Beirut's young men and women and to provide them with the opportunities to show their high competence.

We are bound to let Beirut's voice be heard loud and clear in the parliamentary chamber, so as to contribute to the national decisionmaking process with its resources and status.

All of us Lebanese, in Beirut and in all Lebanon, should make participation in the elections a right we practice and a duty that we do not shirk, because this alone can ensure for Beirut the future we want. We want Beirut to be the capital of a state of establishments, a cradle of democracy, and a defender of freedom. We want Beirut to be the base of national cohesion and the symbol of co-existence and unity of affiliation. We want Beirut to maintain its unique Arab role and its historic struggle for Arab rights and dignity. We want Beirut to be the venue for cultural and economic understanding, Beirut the patriotic, the pioneer of co-existence, and the shining beacon in the Middle East sky.

I have decided to be a candidate for Beirut because I believe that when we work for Beirut, we are working for Lebanon. May you and Lebanon live long. [applause]

Lebanon: Parliament Passes New Election Bill

NC1308120096 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1115 GMT 13 Aug 96

[Live relay by Sa'd Ilyas from the Chamber of Deputies]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] During today's parliamentary session, speakers generally asserted that the government's new draft election bill ignores the spirit the Constitutional Council's ruling, does not respect the significance of the legal appeal against the earlier bill, and fails to treat the Lebanese citizens equally. The speakers also said that the reasons given for exceptions in the bill are unconvincing.

The Chamber of Deputies, meeting in plenary session, passed the new election bill by a majority vote. The following 21 deputies voted against it: Nasib Lahhud, Mikha'il Dahir, Fu'ad al-Sa'd, Pierre Hilu, Marwan Abu-Fadil, Su'ud Rufayil, Zahir al-Khatib, Ibrahim Amin al-Sayyid, Muhammad Barjawi, Ibrahim Bayan, 'Ali Taha, Riyad Abu-Fadil, Michel Samahah, Samir 'Awn, Subhi Yakan, Zuhayr al-'Ubaydi, Kamil Ziyadah Yusuf al-Ma'luf, Najah Wakim, Mustafa Sa'd, and Habib Sadiq.

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Former prime ministers Salim al-Huss and Rashid al-Sulh and Deputy Ziyad al-Sarraf abstained. [passage omitted]

Lebanon: Hizballah Official on Election Ticket, Exchanging POW's

NC1308101396 Beirut AL-NAHAR in Arabic 13 Aug 96 p 9

[Received via Internet]

[FBIS Translated Text] Hizballah Deputy Secretary General Shaykh Na'im Qasim has stated: To avoid deadlock over the representation issue, we have agreed that there will be several election tickets, since agreement over a single ticket is not possible.

Speaking at a ceremony organized by Hizballah and al-Khiyam inhabitants to honor recently liberated prisoners, Qasim said: "The Hizballah ticket will be determined by alliances and will include patriotic people who believe in the resistance and in confronting Israel; who believe in freedom, and in the people's right to run their own affairs and determine their own future; and who are independent and not subservient to any leadership or party that can negate their character, status, or ability to speak for themselves. We will select Muslims and Christians for this ticket and reach understandings with them. We will leave some seats for others to contest, because we do not plan to enter into a battle to break anyone. We want to be represented and we understand that all the other forces need to be represented. This is why we have made this choice. We leave the door open for other prospects if circumstances or convictions change. Nevertheless we are proceeding on this course and very soon we will announce the details about our actions."

Qasim made a fresh initiative for exchanging prisoners, noting that Hizballah is willing to "exchange the prisoner from the Lahd forces—South Lebanese Army—who was detained by the Islamic Resistance last week."

Lebanon: Israeli Forces Shell Villages, Detained Policeman Released

NC1208173896 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1530 GMT 12 August 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Israeli forces today shelled the towns of Qurayʻ and the Mazbud outskirts in Iqlim al-Kharrub. The shelling also involved Yatar, Khirbat Silm, Majdal Silm, Al-Jumaymah, al-Sawwanah, and Wadi al-Qaysiyah. The shelling caused material damages. Also, fires broke out in the olive orchards and forests surrounding the villages.

Elsewhere, reports from the occupied strip noted that a state of fear is prevailing among the agents [South Lebanese Army] after the discovery of several statements containing threats to agents. The statements were found at the agents' residences. Meanwhile, the Israeli occupation forces this afternoon released policeman Munir Muhammad al-Shumaysani, from the town of Yuhmur al-Shaqif, following a detention that lasted more than a month. He was released at the Kafr Tibnit crossing.

Lebanon: 'Resistance' Detonates Devices Under Israeli-SLA Forces

NC1308112596 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1030 GMT 13 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Israeli attacks on the south continued today. This morning, the occupation forces hysterically shelled Wadi Nasir, Tallat al-Mallul, and [placename indistinct] using 81-mm, 120-mm, and 155-mm shells. Hostile warplanes also flew over al-Nabatiyah and Iqlim al-Tuffah at low altitudes and carried out mock raids.

In return, this morning the resistance men detonated two explosive devices under an Israeli occupation and agents [South Lebanese Army, SLA] patrol. In a statement it issued today, Amal Movement said shortly before 0900 this morning a group of its men detonated an explosive device under a joint Israeli-Lahdist patrol on the Rshaf-Dibil road which, according to the Movement's sources, burned one vehicle of the Common Car type and killed and injured around four of its passengers. The Amal statement also adds that after around 40 minutes, the occupation forces brought in mechanized and foot reinforcements to the site of the operation. Another resistance group had set an ambush for it and detonated a second explosive device under the hostile force, causing a number of injuries among the ranks of the enemy and its agents. The resistance did not incur any losses.

The statement continues: The enemy forces brought in helicopters to the scene of the incident and strafed the area with heavy automatic weapons. They also took away the injured men.

Lebanon: Beirut Airport Security Measures Viewed

MM1308091296 London AL-MAJALLAH in Arabic 11-17 Aug 96 pp 18-19

[Interview with Lebanese Minister of Transportation 'Umar Misqawi by Wa'il 'Abbas in Beirut; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] Beirut and its international airport continue to be considered unsafe despite all the

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Lebanese official affirmations to the contrary, headed by those made by President Ilyas al-Hirawi himself, who affirmed on one occasion that Beirut Airport was safer than America's airports as is evident from the fact that not one single security incident has been recorded there since 1990.

Lebanese Minister of Transportation 'Umar Misqawi told AL-MAJALLAH that Beirut Airport today has full capability in the fields of the checking of luggage and persons and the verification of identities through passports and through criminal archives *in addition* to technical control. It is also fully efficient in the field of the organization of customs operations and the mechanisms for travelers' arrivals and departures.

[Misqawi] Undoubtedly, we have gone through times when Beirut Airport was not safe. But an airport's safety depends on the extent of the effectiveness of the entry and departure controls and the ability to adopt the necessary measures to transform it into a "sterile place" which only people who are fully screened and who are concerned with flight operations can enter.

We have faced enormous problems during the airport rehabilitation operation, but we have finally overcome them within a period of two years. All Beirut Airport runways are now surrounded by observation posts, fences and barbed wires to prevent anyone, whoever he may be, from entering the sanctuary of the airport. All this in addition to military observation.

As regards the airport itself, we have carried out numerous improvements which travelers have been noticing day by day. This is in addition to the development of the search operations.

['Abbas] Were you helped by foreign expertise in this regard?

[Misqawi] We have contacted and concluded contracts with a number of international organizations concerned with matters of airport security including the UN International Civil Aviation Organization, which conducted a study of the state of security at Beirut Airport in 1993 and submitted a positive report. Following a number of visits, the aforementioned organization sent experts who helped us block the gaps pinpointed by the report. Consequently, we can say that by the end of 1993 we had full confidence in Beirut Airport.

We were also visited by a delegation from the British "Foreign Airports Security" which studied the situation at Beirut Airport and was extremely satisfied. An Egyptian delegation of experts also visited Beirut Airport and drew up a good report about it.

In addition to that, we concluded contract with the American company "Aerospace Service International" which specializes in airport security to carry out a study of the basic security conditions that should exist in the present Beirut Airport and in the airport we are now building, which will have a capacity of 6 million travelers annually.

['Abbas] But was not one of the reasons given to justify the American embargo on travel to Lebanon that it lacked sufficient security at its airport?

[Misqawi] The American position is a political one and cannot be relied upon in the formulation of positions. Many American companies visit Lebanon with special permission [from the U.S. Government]. There is a political problem pertaining to the situation in Lebanon.

The Americans are fully aware more than anybody else that the climate of security events in Lebanon was a premeditated and controlled operation and was not spontaneous. They know this better than anyone. But that stage has now ended and they know better than anyone the extent of the stability of security in Lebanon at this stage.

['Abbas] But what about Hizballah's presence so close to Beirut Airport?

[Misqawi] Hizballah is a political party that entertains a particular political view. The Lebanese Government binds it with many things. But the only thing is that the government cannot prevent anyone from carrying arms against Israel in occupied Southern Lebanon. But in Beirut, the situation is completely different, as there the security forces have full control of matters and the only organized weapons that exist there are those of the Lebanese authorities.

['Abbas] Who undertakes the security protection of the areas surrounding the airport?

[Misqawi] This security is provided by the airport security machinery which consists of separate security forces responsible for safeguarding the security of the airport and the surrounding area. Furthermore, there is an army air base at the airport which carries out observation operations. There is also another army base, but it does not interfere directly in matters of security except in the areas surrounding it.

['Abbas] How about internal protection?

[Misqawi] The public security elements directly search luggage and travelers. The United States and France have provided us with sophisticated detection equipment and this is followed by manual search which can be rigorous on some occasions in accordance with the

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information received by the public security department. We use well-studied measures in controlling security conditions at the airport.

['Abbas] How effective have these measures been?

[Misqawi] They are highly effective. We have succeeded in unmasking several smuggling operations. Furthermore, not one single security incident has been recorded at Beirut Airport for over four years.

['Abbas] But a Lebanese recently hijacked a Spanish plane flying to Cuba and there has been information that he came from Beirut. What do you say to that?

[Misqawi] This man set off from Beirut Airport and then passed through Zurich and Madrid airports. His documents and the visa stamped on his passport were all in order. He carried no arms. So I could not predict what intentions he had. Nobody suspected him either at Zurich and Madrid airports. Besides, he only hijacked the plane using a tape recorder and a shaver.

I cannot say that we will frustrate all operations, because there is no such thing as complete control. Incidents happen in all the world's airports including American airports whatever the measures taken to prevent them.

['Abbas] What about controls on the workers who enter the airport?

[Misqawi] They enter in accordance with lists of names and are subjected to very rigorous security controls which prevent them from going to any place away from their place of work. We hope to be able to complete a plan for providing all workers and staff with magnetic cards and maintaining constant television monitoring at the airport in the future.

['Abbas] Do you give your security elements any special training?

[Misqawi] The responsible security officials participate in conferences, meetings, and training seminars. But we are still in need of staff as we have a great shortage of manpower. [Misqawi ends]

For his part, Beirut Airport Director General Riyad 'Abdallah affirmed to AL-MAJALLAH that "the search operations are so rigorous and meticulous that it has begun to annoy some people."

Following a tour of the various inspection centers at the airport, 'Abdallah said: "We take all the necessary legal measures to prevent any illegitimate interference with flights and to safeguard the safety of flights by guarding the perimeters of the airport, preventing any illegitimate entry into the airport, and searching travelers and their luggage, which we carry somewhat to excess so as to ensure the protection of travelers and planes."

'Abdallah pointed out that Lebanon has endorsed the international agreement on illegitimate interference that could harm air travel security. This agreement has become law after having been approved by the chamber of deputies. He pointed out that "in the past, the trials of air pirates used to take place in accordance with the penal code only."

Lebanon: AL-SAFIR Reports on ILMG Deliberations, Arguments

NC1208165996 Beirut AL-SAFIR in Arabic 10 Aug 96 p 2

[Report by George 'Alam: "The al-Naqurah Meeting: Started 'Cautiously', Then Its Temperature Rose. Argument Over the UN Forces Role"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Diplomatic sources described the unofficial meeting for coordination held by the Israel-Lebanon Monitoring Group [ILMG], stemming from the "April Understanding," in al-Naqurah the day before yesterday as a formality and an "ice breaker" to introduce the members to each other, specially the representatives of Lebanon, Syria, and Israel.

The sources said: At the start of the meeting, all the members entered the hall and some of them exchanged greetings while others shook hands. U.S. Ambassador David Greenlee (the group chairman) introduced the members and then made a speech, in which he congratulated them on forming the group and drew up the broad lines for its work in accordance with the April Understanding mechanism.

The sources added that the Lebanese and Syrian sides addressed the chairman during the discussions, to avoid direct dialogues with the Israeli delegation. They said that "this procedure is dictated by diplomatic considerations, which bind members to address the chairman directly during meetings."

They noted that there was no written official agenda and therefore the discussion at first dealt with the group's mission, which is restricted to the protection of civilians, that is, "the group has nothing to do with any security escalation, unless it affects civilians in southern Lebanon or northern Israel." They said that this point was resolved after the Israeli representative tried to assert that the group's mission is to limit the cycle of violence and escalation, and after the U.S. representative tried to agree with some of his points.

The second issue discussed revolved around the procedure for filing complaints. The argument was resolved by agreement that the group will receive complaints only from countries — specifically from the two concerned countries, Lebanon and Israel — and not from

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individuals, parties, or militias. The complaint must be presented within 24 hours and looked into within 72 hours. The chairmanship will be the side that calls for the meeting and prepares the agenda. But each member state will have the right to raise issues that could be included in the agenda, after consultations with the other member states in preparation for discussing them.

The point that was the focus of a long argument concerned the "verification of a complaint." What really happened here?

The sources said that the group first discussed what it will do when it receives a complaint in order to verify it. Will officers undertake a field mission, that is, a survey of the area where the violation takes place? Or will they bring in military elements working under their orders? Or will there be cooperation with the UN Interim Force in Lebanon [UNIFIL] "which will host the group's meetings at its headquarters?"

The sources expressed reservations about revealing the formula agreed on and which resolved the argument on this issue. But, they said: Monitoring is the group's mission. Choosing its members from among military officers and privates was done on the basis of carrying out its mission, and therefore there is no scope for confusion or different interpretation. The members have only to carry out the duties and responsibilities entrusted to them. The sources noted, however, that the representative of any state can choose some aides to carry out the mission.

The sources went on to say that it was noteworthy that the temperature of the discussions rose when it touched on the UNIFIL role in the south and the possibility of relying on it in some matters, to help the group complete its mission as best as possible. The Israeli representative rejected this totally and criticized the UNIFIL role in the south. The U.S. representative went along with him to a certain extent, while the French side strongly defended this role and backed the Lebanese and Syrian sides, which praised the UNIFIL role "that has not been completed as it was supposed to be because of the obstacles placed in its way by Israel."

Apart from this point, which took quite some time, the meeting was unrestricted. It began in a cautious atmosphere and with tense nerves, but gradually became more relaxed. It ended without any worthwhile decisions, since there were no specific issues or official agenda.

Why did Lebanon send diplomat Farid 'Abbud to participate alongside Staff Colonel Mahir al-Tufayli, when it had officially said that it would be represented by a senior officer only? The sources replied that Lebanon has traditionally been represented in the al-Naqurah meetings since the [1948] truce by a delegation led by an officer and aided by a diplomat. Ambassador 'Ali Hamadah was the first to represent Lebanon in the al-Naqurah meetings, when he was a counselor (as is Farid 'Abbud) and not yet an ambassador.

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Syria: Damascus Radio Urges Arab, World 'Confrontation' of Israeli Policy

JN1208195696 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1133 GMT 12 Aug 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: We do not have the slightest doubt that the world is eagerly looking forward to peace, and that the spread of peace throughout the world is the people's ultimate wish. This comes from people's belief in the role of peace in creating a civilized society and promoting mankind's welfare and happiness amid security and reassurance for its present and future generations.

Contrary to all that the world is looking forward to and hoping for, however, Binyamin Netanyahu is deliberately tampering with the peace process without paying attention to the fact that his tampering could be very dangerous and that his aggressive policy could lead to catastrophes whose repercussions are difficult, if not impossible, to confine to the Middle East, control, or prevent from endangering world peace and the interests of peoples.

Binyamin Netanyahu's intransigence, adherence to his aggressive and expansionist policy, and his insistence on occupying Arab territories and disavowing the Palestinian people's national rights irrevocably confirm his deep hostility to peace. Moreover, Netanyahu's proposals confirm the sharp contradiction between what he calls for, on the one hand, and real peace on the other.

Peace is the antithesis of war and the result of a sincere desire for coexistence with others in accordance with the criteria of justice and noble human values. Netanyahu, however, only believes in violence. He finds concern and tension the best atmosphere to contain the contradictions within the variegated Israeli entity, and to infuse all strata of this entity with ideas that are derived from blind religious fanaticism and old complexes in order to increase the collective grudge and glorify violence as part of circulating the concept of security and Israel's need for secure borders.

The secure borders Netanyahu is talking about are the other face, or the other formula, of the immense desire for expansion and usurpation of more Arab territories. This fact is very obvious in the Israeli Government's program and in its decision to cancel all restrictions on expanding the settlements and building new settlements throughout the occupied Arab territories.

Vis-a-vis this, and given what is taking place on the ground, is it possible in any way whatsoever for peace to see light? Can there be any further doubts about Netanyahu's aggressive intentions and hostility toward peace? Hence, is there any room for wondering what Netanyahu is harboring and what he is preparing for in terms of new aggressions by which he sees a way to entrench Israel's previous aggressions and a springboard for new aggressions? These aggressions are motivated by the mentality of myths and by the dreams about establishing an Israeli empire to control the Arab East and Maghreb and the regions beyond them.

The cause of peace in the Middle East poses a challenge to the international community whose resolutions specified the terms for establishing peace. The cause of peace also poses a challenge to the Arabs. Therefore, only a serious international and Arab confrontation of this challenge can end Israel's intransigence and its aggressive, expansionist schemes as well as its tampering with the peace process and peoples' destinies.

Syria: AL-BA'TH, TISHRIN Reply to Netanyahu's Proposals

JN1308083296 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0456 GMT 13 Aug 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] The newspaper AL-BA'TH says: The Israeli Government continues to make proposals while playing with words. It shows flexibility toward the peace process, but it conceals retreat from and disavowal and rejection of the bases of this process. What Netanyahu said yesterday regarding his readiness to resume peace negotiations on the Syrian track without preconditions is similar to what he said only few days after he assumed power in Israel at the head of an extremist government. This government can at least be described as being a government of generals and rabbis.

In its commentary today, the newspaper AL-BA'TH adds: When Netanyahu claims he is concerned about the peace process and expresses his readiness to resume the talks without preconditions, we can understand that the conditions in question are the same bases and principles on which the peace process was basically based. This clearly means that the head of the Likud government seeks to torpedo the entire peace process and to take the negotiations back to square one.

AL-BA'TH says: Netanyahu wants to negotiate on the continued occupation of the Golan. Regarding negotiations on southern Lebanon, he wants to put his occupation and the legitimate presence of the Syrian Arab forces in the fraternal country on equal footing. Moreover, he wants to expand settlements and to keep Jerusalem.

The paper stresses: What Netanyahu wants is rejected part and parcel. His proposals, which are void of any

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essence, are also rejected because they revolve in the circle of maneuvering and procrastination.

Concluding, the paper says: In light of this, the Arabs are required to embody the Cairo summit resolutions and the efforts being made by al-Asad's Syria to adopt a unified stand toward Israel's intransigence.

In its commentary, the newspaper TISHRIN says: The Israeli prime minister undoubtedly realizes that Lebanon is determined to coordinate with Syria to the end. This is because a just solution hinges on Israel's comprehensive withdrawal. There will be no peace for Lebanon if there is no peace with Syria, and no peace for the Arabs if there is no peace with the Palestinians. The Arab cause is one, and this is why Syria calls for a just and comprehensive peace that gives everyone his rights.

TISHRIN adds: The Israeli prime minister does not want peace, he wants to resume occupation and settlement.

The paper says: It is no coincidence that he gave the major portfolios to the most extremist fascists who openly call for annihilating the Arabs and expelling them from their homes. It is also no coincidence that he repeatedly said that there will be no withdrawal from the Golan, southern Lebanon, Jerusalem, and the West Bank and gave a free hand to settlement activity in them.

TISHRIN adds: The Israeli prime minister only deceives himself because Syria and Lebanon will not relinquish their eternal right to restoring their territories. Neither will they exchange the resolutions of the international legitimacy with illusions of negotiations without preconditions and a withdrawal that is fused with security arrangements which restrict the Lebanese people's freedom and sovereignty. President Hafiz al-Asad replied to Netanyahu and his suspicious calls in eloquent words when he said: Lebanon and Syria first.

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Afghanistan

Afghanistan: 13 Aug Cease-Fire Agreement Reached With Northern Rebels

LD1208175396 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 12 Aug 96

[Announcement by the office of the Afghan Prime Minister Golboddin Hekmatyar]

[FBIS Translated Text] Brother Hekmatyar, the prime minister of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, has sent a delegation to the north for talks and understanding with member parties of the Higher State Council in the north of the country. The commission was tasked [words indistinct] to discuss the issues of the reopening of Salang Highway, their joining in with the peace process, and their participation in the interim government. The results of talks in the north raise hopes and will soon be announced.

For the time being, agreement has been reached on a cease-fire in the north of the country. Under the agreement the cease-fire will come into effect at 0800 [local time] tomorrow, 13 August 1996 and will be observed until the announcement of the outcome of the talks. During this time any kind of [military] movement and propaganda against one another will be stopped. It is hoped that during this period talks will lead to a definite result: That the parties concerned will participate in the interim government and this cease-fire will become a permanent one. [words indistinct]

Afghanistan: Hekmatyar Congratulates Chernomyrdin on Re-Election

LD1208192996 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 12 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Brother Hekmatyar, the prime minister of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, has sent to Moscow a message of congratulations to the prime minister of Russia on his re-election:

Your Excellency Viktor Chernomyrdin, the prime minister of the Russian Federation,

I hereby convey my and the government of the Islamic State of Afghanistan's congratulations and best wishes to you and your country's government on your re-election as the prime minister of the Russian Federation. I strongly believe that your re-election to this important office is a sign of full confidence of the people and parliament of your country in you to continue and encourage the [words indistinct] of reform program unconditionally. I take this opportunity to wish you health and further success in your work.

Afghanistan: Taleban Clash With Local Citizens in Chekhcharan

LD1208183196 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 12 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Taleban have fired into a crowd of women who were demanding the release of their relatives from prison in Chekhcharan, the capital city of Ghowr Province. Reports reaching BAKHTAR say that after the recent clashes in the town of Chekhcharan, the Taleban arrested 70 people in the town accusing them of cooperation with government forces. Following the incident, a large number of women in the town held a demonstration. The Taleban responded by firing into the crowd injuring five women. Relatives of the prisoners responded by attacking the Taleban with sticks and throwing stones. As a result a number of the Taleban were injured.

The reports say that following the incident the Taleban have started forcibly recruiting youths in the province into their ranks. The joining of 40 youths with government forces in a Chekhcharan village and the defection of some people from the Taleban's ranks have made the situation in Chekhcharan very tense.

India

India: Gujral Says India 'Will Not Succumb to American Pressures'

BK1208130396 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 12 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The external affairs minister has said he will be writing to the U.S. secretary of state in a day or two reaffirming India's position on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Mr. I.K. Gujral's letter will be in response to Mr. Warren Christopher's communication sent through the U.S. ambassador to India last week. The minister was speaking to newsmen at Thimbu at the end of his three-visit to Bhutan. Mr. Gujral also said India will not succumb to American pressures to desist from vetoing the treaty.

India: Officers Propose India Delcare Itself Nuclear Weapon State

BK1108074196 Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 10 Aug 96 p 6

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Senior retired and some serving foreign service and defence officers unanimously proposed on Friday [9 August] that India should declare itself a nuclear weapon state (NWS) while giving a "no-first-use" assurance.

"The US government has thrice submitted to the Congress that India has nuclear weapons which can be as-

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sembled at a short notice. Successive CIA chiefs have made similar submissions.

"In other words, the US government already considers us to be a nuclear state. The only way out is for India to declare itself a nuclear weapon state and pledge no first use," a former secretary (defence supplies and production) and ex-chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee K. Subramanyam said at a seminar organised by the Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis here.

A case was also made for continuing with testing the Agni intermediate range ballistic missile (IRBM). "India must carry out between a dozen to two dozen tests of Agni over the next two years. This is a priority item and will give the right signals." said IDSA director Air Cmde (retd) [Commander, retired] Jasjit Singh.

There was a difference of views on whether or not India should conduct more nuclear tests. Former vice chief of naval staff Vice Admiral K.K. Nayyar said it was "essential to conduct a series of (nuclear) tests". All these years "we have been confusing ourselves and the rest of the world by maintaining an ambiguous nuclear stance," he added.

Defence strategy analyst C. Raja Mohan similarly suggested that, India must conduct a series of nuclear tests "and thereby cross the psychological barrier". Mr Mohan, who attended the conference on, disarmament talks at Geneva, said the delegates had been handed a rolling text of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) draft as negotiations on the treaty were confined to between the five nuclear weapons states. "For the rest of the participants, the text was just a declaration," he added.

A similar view was also expressed by a foreign service official who said the CTBT negotiations have become a "sham" and been relegated to "a Permanent-5 treaty". "India has decided to block the CTBT because we cannot limit our sovereignty", he asserted.

Retired foreign service official Brijesh Mishra said it was now time for India to move from talking of the nuclear option to utilising it. "We do not have much time. We have debated on the issue far too long."

India: CTBT Guarantees Said Not Meeting Nation's Concerns

BK1308132796 Madras THE HINDU in English 13 Aug 96 p 1

[Report by K.K. Katyal]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India's concerns on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) are not met by the latest offer by the U.S. and some others — guaranteeing against coercion of New Delhi for its ratification.

The U.S. assurance, conveyed by the Secretary of State, Mr. Warren Christopher, last week, was intended to ensure against an Indian "veto" in the current Geneva negotiations, under the auspices of the Conference on Disarmament that could block the transmission of the treaty text to the U.N. General Assembly.

Some other countries have since commended the guarantee idea.

Also, there has been talk of a joint assurance by the five nuclear powers. With New Delhi's stand against the treaty in the present form unchanged, and the leading promoters determined not to change the text, its smooth passage is ruled out. It may be taken to the General Assembly through another route either after it is blocked or in anticipation of the Indian action. During the current phase — and the last phase of Geneva discussions, that began some two weeks ago — the External Affairs Minister, Mr. I.K. Gujral, has received communications on the subject from his counterparts in Germany, Italy and Belgium, apart from the U.S. He will reply to each one of them, re-stating India's objections to both the proposal, envisaging assurances against coercion, and the unprecedented entry-into-force provision in the treaty.

Given the oft-repeated stand by the government, there could be no ambiguity about his response — that bilateral assurances are of little help in regard to a multilateral treaty and that a better course would be to amend the E.I.F. [entry-into-force], so as not to bind India to support the treaty's transmission to the U.N.

In the domestic context, the consensus remains live. The officials of the External Affairs Ministry have kept the leaders of various political parties updated on the Geneva discussions and related developments including Mr. Christopher's suggestion.

The American Ambassador, Mr. Frank Wisner, too met the BJP leader, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee, obviously as part of the effort to explain the U.S. stand on the subject. Mr. Gujral will be writing to them in a day or two, detailing the latest developments.

As was evident from the recent debates in Parliament and public statements outside, there is remarkable unanimity in the country, with the non-official opinion, if anything, harder than the government's position.

Although some foreign governments may find it odd — because of their inadequate appreciation of the domestic political scene here — the reality is as follows — no government in New Delhi could afford to accept

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the CTBT text in the present form, and if it does, it collapses. The Delhi-based diplomats, it is hoped, will keep their capitals posted with this reality.

India: Article Recommends 'Standing Up' to U.S.

BK1008092096 Delhi THE PIONEER in English 9 Aug 96 p 10

[Article by Nikhil Chakravartty: "Standing Up to the U.S. Will Gain India Friends"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] It is said that Americans in general do not have a sense of history. This was rather glaringly visible when the US President, Mr Bill Clinton, chose the eve of the anniversary of the destruction of Hiroshima to deliver a homily on terrorism: "Terrorism is the enemy of our generation and we must prevail."

The Atom Bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima in 1945 has been the most fiendish act of terrorism in the 20th century. For several years the US tried to justify this heinous act by saying that it helped in shortening the World War. Recent disclosures from official papers, since declassified, make it abundantly clear that the Japanese Government was already on the point of surrender before the Hiroshima bombing, and the American high command had been aware of it, making it obvious that the Bomb was not at all necessary to bring the War to an end. After Hiroshima, a second Bomb was dropped by the US Air Force on Nagasaki, killing thousands without the least compunction.

Those of us who were witness to the world reaction after those bombings noted that it was done by the US to an Asian country, killing millions of Asian people. No Bomb was dropped in Europe or any other territory of White supremacy. Second, Washington dropped the Bomb to assert its world hegemony as it dreamt of world domination through atomic power. That dream was smashed over the decades as the scientists and engineers of other countries could break the US nuclear monopoly. And the countries possessing nuclear weapons are anxious to retain their monopoly of what they think is the ultimate weapon, and not let it pass to the more populous countries which are part of the Third World. Thus, world domination of a few nuclear weapon powers has been the persistent line of the US authorities, and they want to build a new world order of their dream by effective nuclear blackmail. Nobody in his senses would uphold terrorism, but it hardly lies in the mouth of those who have such heinous record as the MyLai massacre and carpet bombing in Vietnam to talk about their commitment to fight terrorism.

If the sense of history is missing with the American President, so too is logic. What has been the provocation for his latest outburst on terrorism? First was the crash of a TWA plane soon after take-off from US soil. And the second was the bomb that exploded in the Atlanta park just next to the Olympic Centennial Stadium. In both the cases none of the US agencies have been able to trace who were the people responsible for the bombings. No doubt these too have come as a severe blow to US claims to security within Fortress America. But who did Mr Clinton blame for these outrages? Without any proof whatsoever, he has held Libya and Iran responsible for these acts of terrorism. The charge against Libya has been an old one, that it had given shelter to two persons suspected to be involved in the blowing up of a Panam aircraft eight years ago — for which the US in the past has taken many aggressive steps against Libya, permitted by no code of international law. This time Iran has been tagged to Libya as the target of American action in the name of fighting terrorism.

American adventurism

Since the fall of the royal regime of the Shah of Iran, Washington has tried to break the power and resistance of the Iranian Government. In retaliation, the Iranian revolutionaries once even besieged the US embassy in Teheran for months as a symbol of their national assertion against US domination which the Shah had fostered. There was a blockade of Iran, but the power of the Iranian people could bear out the American offensive. The attack on Iran took many forms over the years, including terror attack by the US armed forces in the Gulf on Iran's civilian aircraft on normal flight. Such terrorism is, of course, permitted under official American lexicon. For some time now, the US has been preparing to blockade Iran to prevent its oil export. Now, such terror actions are being regularised by Mr Clinton's announcement, of a sanctions bill which seeks to penalise foreign firms investing $40 million or more in the energy sector in Iran and Libya. What is the US game behind this move? In the bitter trade rivalry that the US faces today from Japan and European powers, the Middle East oil plays a major role. These countries draw their major supplies from the Gulf, and if the giant companies from Europe and Japan could be prevented access to Iranian and Libyan oil, it would be to the US's advantage. Iraq has already been crippled, while in Saudi Arabia the warning signal has come for the US in the form of the recent sabotage bombing in a US base there, which indicates that all is not well for Washington even in Saudi Arabia.

Obviously, this time it has been a precipitate action on the part of the Clinton Administration. When President George Bush mounted the attack on Iraq, it was done under the cloak of UN intervention. This time even that

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fig-leaf has been removed, and the US President on his own has been sending warlike threats to two sovereign countries.

The threat of US sanctions against Iran has provoked highly critical reactions from European Union countries. Both Germany and France have denounced President Clinton's move as a barrier to international trade. They are making it clear that their nationals could not be made to bow to the dictates of the US's own national laws. Only a few days ago, the G-7 meeting at Lyons, in France, had decided to work out a package of measures to combat terrorism, and there too the US found itself isolated on the question of unilateral sanction. This is the point of most acute isolation of the US even within the G-7.

The mad rush with which Mr Clinton is pushing the CTBT [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty] is already regarded as part of his presidential election campaign. Equally aggressively, these totally irregular measures against Libya and Iran are part of the Clinton presidential campaign programme. If the Bush presidential campaign tried to act as part of UN stand on Iraq, Mr Clinton this time is banking on attacking Iran, without realising that this is a very dangerous game.

India can hardly afford to be a bystander in this American adventurism. The case against Iran cannot be sustained even in a heavily packed Security Council. Hence this unilateral move on the part of the US under Mr Clinton. It is time that India publicly — and through diplomatic channels — conveyed its abhorrence to such aggressive measures without the least shred of justification. India has stakes in its relation with Iran — both economic and political.

It is all the more urgent that New Delhi voice its disapproval of the aggressive posture of the US towards Iran and Libya.

The Foreign Minister, Mr Inder Kumar Gujral, has just returned from a very successful trip to Jakarta, where India's firm and principled stand on CTBT has been explained not only to the ASEAN countries but also to other major powers. Those who have been worried that our rejection of CTBT would be widely misunderstood should note that Mr Gujral's intervention in Jakarta reinforced the validity of our disapproval of the CTBT in its present form. It is time that the logic of the same experience led us to repudiate the US moves against Iran. That will not isolate us but gain us many more friends.

India: Russian Ambassador Notes Need For Multipolar World

BK1008151796 Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 10 Aug 96 p 11

["Saturday Interview" with Russian ambassador to India Albert S. Chernyshev by Prakash Nanda on 10 August: "We Would Like A New Strategic Partnership With India"; place unknown]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] With the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the subsequent lapse of the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation, the ties between New Delhi and Moscow entered a new phase in which, the experts say, realism, rather than nostalgia, began to play the most important role. Troubles arose on the front of the rupee-rouble exchange and repayment of Indian debt to Moscow. There were doubts in India over maintaining the vital line of supply of Russian arms on which, the military was over-dependent. Some of these doubts, however, have been removed in the meantime. The rupee-rouble issue, for instance, was sorted out in 1993. But the impression persists that the old warmth in the bilateral ties cannot be restored. However, the new Russian ambassador to India Albert S Chernyshev, who before his present posting was a deputy minister of external affairs, the highest rank that a career diplomat in Russia can reach, is not at all pessimistic. He spoke to Prakash Nanda on the course of Indo-Russian ties.

Q: How do you view the present state of Indo-Russian relations?

A: Our ties have been always special, irrespective of the governments of the day. Because, there has always been a national consensus both in Russia and India for a special bilateral relationship. But things can always be better. I hope that the next six months will prove very meaningful in this regard. Though exact dates have not been finalised as yet, I can tell you that Prime Minister Deve Gowda is to visit Moscow before the end of this year, most probably next month, and President Boris Yeltsin is to come to India before March next year.

Q: It is said that the Indo-Russian relations do not have the same warmth as was the case when the Soviet Union was live and kicking. Do you agree?

A: I will answer this question like this. At least as far as Russia is concerned, you will find still children in the streets of Moscow, who if asked to point out which countries are the friends of Russia, will be definitely mentioning India. I do not know what the Indian children think of Russia. But I am sorry to tell you that the Indian businessmen no longer consider Russia

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to be a dependable and friendly country. [sentence as published]

Q: Why?

A: They complain that Russia is not a safe country do business with since it is undergoing a transition, that the Russian legislations are not strong and effective enough to generate confidence in the foreign investors and that there exists a dangerous mafia in my country.

But my answer to all these is that India, too, is undergoing a transition, that the Indian laws are equally, if not more, inadequate to do business with and that mafia also exists in India. In fact, I am yet to find a country where there is no mafia. In some ways, the mafia in the U.S. is more dangerous than the one in Russia. But that does not mean one is not doing business with the U.S.

Q: What, then, should be done to augment the economic interactions between the two countries?

A: First, we must have the figure of ten billion dollars as the immediate target to reach in our bilateral trade, a five-fold increase from the present figure. It is ridiculuous that Russia is going all the way to Brazil to buy jute products instead of coming to India and you are going to West Europe for things that are available in Russia. Secondly, we must have adequate business structures in both the countries. There should be encouragement to invest in both the countries. In this context, it is strange that the Indian businessmen do not trust the Russian banks, even though many of those have assets worth of more than one billion dollars. Thirdly, India and Russia must have arrangements so as to protect each other's investors and avoid double taxation.

In Moscow, we have already formed a special Russian-Indian Business Council, consisting of the representatives of the major banks and leading industries in fields of space, aviation and arms. We value the Indian market. We hope that the Indian government and industries will reciprocate our feelings.

Q: What about the question of India importing arms from Russia. Once, India was critically dependent on your country for arms and even now 70 per cent of spare parts needed for the Indian military are to come from your country. Is Russia going to respond to these needs?

A: There need not be any apprehension on this count. As it is, in December 1994, our two countries did reach an agreement with regard to arms supply up to the year 2000. This agreement is being implemented.

Q: It now seems that India and Russia have serious differences over the proposed text [of] the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). Does this mean that Moscow will favour, in accordance with the provisions of the CTBT text, measures against India if it does not endorse the treaty?

A: Let me make it very clear that the CTBT will not come in the way of our otherwise special ties. In fact, Moscow would like to build a new strategic partnership with New Delhi. Together, we can do many positive things, not only for ourselves but also for the region surrounding us and outside.

Q: Could you be a little bit more specific on this point?

A: We can coordinate in combating terrorism in the world. Both Moscow and New Delhi must endeavour together towards bringing the warring sides in Afghanistan to the negotiating table. There is need for a joint approach in our relations with the countries in South East Asia. In fact, Russia is very keen on developing triangular relations involving New Delhi and Beijing. The same triangular relations can also be developed with individual Central Asian Republics.

The point to note is that both India and Russia have a vested interest in seeing to it the world is multi-polar.

India: Decision To Strengthen Bilateral Relations With Nepal

BK1308094196 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 13 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India and Nepal have decided to strengthen their bilateral relations. Ways to further activate cooperation in several areas were considered when the foreign minister of Nepal, Dr. P.C. Lohani, called on the prime minister, Mr. Deve Gowda, in New Delhi today. The prime minister conveyed his good wishes to his Nepalese counterpart and emphasized the priority India attaches to the friendly ties between the two countries.

Mr. Lohani was accompanied by the Nepalese ambassador and others.

India: Bhutan King Told of Pakistan's 'Unenthusiastic Response'

BK1208022396 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India has expressed disappointment over Pakistan's unenthusiastic response to its initiatives for improving bilateral relations. The reference to New Delhi's initiatives came when the external affairs minister, Mr. I.K. Gujral, now visiting Bhutan, met King Jigme Singye Wangchuck in Thimphu yesterday.

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Briefing newsmen after the 90-minute meeting, the foreign secretary, Mr. Salman Haider, said today that the king was told about India having taken several unilateral steps and its readiness to follow them up despite Pakistan not reciprocating. Mr. Gujral said these steps were aimed at promoting good-neighborly relations with Pakistan.

Bhutan strongly backed India in opposing the inclusion of contentious bilateral issues in the SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] agenda. The Bhutanese foreign minister, Mr. Lyonpo Dawa Tsering, after informal talks with Mr. Gujral, told newsmen that the seven-nation regional group should not be allowed to be bogged down by bilateral problems.

India: Accord Reached With Bangladesh To Continue Water Talks

BK1008113496 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 10 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India and Bangladesh have agreed to hold further consultations for a broad-based permanent accord on sharing of Ganges waters. This was announced by the visiting Bangladeshi foreign secretary, Mr. Farooq Sobhan, in New Delhi yesterday. The Indian foreign secretary, Mr. Salman Haider, was also present. Mr. Sobhan said Bangladesh is encouraged by the positive response of New Delhi to address the water-sharing problem on an urgent basis. He said the external affairs minister, Mr. I.K. Gujral, has agreed to visit Dhaka early next month. Both the countries also agreed for continuous exchange of experts on breaching of embankments on the Ganges river.

India: Accord With Bangladesh To Monitor Anti-Smuggling Measures

BK1208094396 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 12 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India and Bangladesh have agreed to repair and reinstall 57 pillars along the border in the South Tripura and Comilla sector. The decision was taken at the end of the two-day flag meeting in Comilla yesterday. The two sides decided to set up a six-member committee to execute the setting up of the pillars. Representatives of the Border Security Force and the Bangladesh Rifles will meet after every two months to monitor anti-smuggling measures and the law and order situation in the border areas.

India: Bangladesh Denies Allegation of Helping Militants

BK1308093996 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 13 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Bangladesh Rifles deputy director general, Brigadier Mohammad Abdur Rab, has said there is no question of helping militants or providing them shelter in Bangladesh. He has also proposed a joint inspection of its territory to trace possible extremist hideouts. The offer was made during the annual conference on border cooperation with India which ended in Agartala last evening. India had alleged that insurgents operating in its northeastern region had hideouts and training camps in Bangladesh. Both the sides would help each other to check transborder crimes, smuggling, and infiltration, he added.

India: India's Ties to ASEAN Merit 'Serious and Determined Appreciation'

BK1008101296 Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English 8 Aug 96 p 9

[Article by Subhash Chakravarti: "New Star in the East"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India's "look east" destiny is at last getting nearer after wallowing for a better part of its independent existence under the illusion it was a big player in Asia. The promise of India's becoming a full dialogue partner of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Asian Regional Forum merits serious and detailed appreciation of the region's geostrategic changes.

Perhaps innocence and blinkered old ideas failed to stimulate the members of parliament to take any interest in the outcome of the recently concluded ministerial level meetings of ASEAN and ARF. The latter is a platform of nations sharing a common security perception in Asia Pacific. The United States and Japan are among the ARF's participants.

India's admission to these two regional fora is a measure of the increased recognition of India's economic clout in the region and its role in the long term security of Asia Pacific.

There are a few historical oddities in the present ASEAN lineup. It was established during the Vietnam war with US help to provide a security buffer against the supposed southward march of communism from Vietnam and China. A year from now ASEAN is due to celebrate the 30th anniversary of its foundation — with Vietnam as a full member and China a full dialogue partner. Vietnam as an ARF member will share a common platform with former enemy, the US.

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There is, however, some diplomatic murmuring, communicated in monosyllables, among some nations In close proximity to China. This explains why the need for ARF gains ground at a time the nations in Asia Pacific, including China, are enjoying increasing prosperity thanks to market driven economic growth.

It is obvious some countries including Vietnam are uneasy with the long term ambitions of China, notwithstanding the ideological commitment of the ruling dispensation in Beijing. China has been sending wrong signals to these countries in cynical disregard of their sensitivity. China's claim to the oil bearing Spratly islands in the South China Sea — islands claimed by Many ASEAN members — and China's blatant demonstrations of its nuclear prowess are spreading speculation, if not fear, among the countries in the region.

The situation is still tentative. There is as yet no move to do anything openly confrontational. In other words, China is interacting with ASEAN, the US and Japan in a form of constructive engagement. Just as well since such a position suits India at a time when it is improving relations with China.

India needs to proceed with care, because even minimal provocation could lead to a shift in the situation. At the same time, India's gradual integration with the security regime of Asia Pacific, on the strength of a reputation as a responsible power, should give India certain strategic advantages over its neighbours. And its south Asian Security concerns remain paramount.

There were some differences among the ASEAN countries about India's joining ARF. Singapore closely supported the US and Australia, facilitating India's entry. The door was opened after India held joint naval exercises with the US Australian, Singaporean, Thai, Malaysian and Indonesian navies. Appropriately, the next naval exercise between India and the US is to be held just as India plans to involve itself in naval vigilance on a wider scale. It is not insignificant that the US is now reticent to talk about India developing its own nuclear submarines. The US vehemently protested when India once borrowed a "Charlie" class Soviet nuclear submarine on the grounds that it would encourage nuclear naval rivalry in the region. The position now being maintained by the US seems to strengthen the impression that the focus is now on the Chinese navy, largely fuelled by nuclear power. The Japanese were shocked when they tracked a Chinese nuclear submarine operating off their coast. These are a few examples of what is promoting the emergence of a new strategic perception. One, mind you, that is not precipitating a cold war with nations ganging up against another country or group of countries. Instead all parties are proceeding on measured steps without mortgaging their permanent interests. China's formal position on its relations with ASEAN, for example, is pragmatic and astute. ASEAN has been able to impress China by its economic growth, market opportunities and capacity to turn economic prosperity into politically confidence.

India can also gain some mileage from the current priorities set by ASEAN. India's trade with ASEAN has grown at a dramatic pace of 60 to 100 per cent in each of the past three years and now stands at over five billion dollars. It compares favourably with some of the other full dialogue partners. India is aiming to treble this amount by year 2000. India is keen to get ASEAN capital particularly in all areas of infrastructural development — ports and shipping, civil aviation, power, telecommunications, roads and railways. India wants a place in east and southeast Asia's flying geese formation.

The relevance of the 15 million strong Indian diaspora in southeast Asia is also something to reckon with. The key to greater exchanges with ASEAN is the prospect of trade and investment opportunities. India has made a meaningful offer of sharing space technology with ASEAN countries. India's space technology, as well as its innovations in some select scientific areas, is extremely advanced.

Singapore is particularly interested in investing in such projects in India. Thailand has lately emerged as a major investor in India. Such exchanges are having an appropriate influence on larger bilateral relations with the ASEAN member countries and the region at large. India's association with ASEAN as a full dialogue partner allows it to take a formal position within the setup. But whether it will be a force to reckon with will depend largely on getting some market share in the region's trade. It is not beyond India's resources provided it has a fine tuned policy, something presently under a cloud owing to uncertain politics at home.

India's capacity to influence ASEAN has further been strengthened by its presence in ARF [ASEAN Regional Forum] where next to the US it has the largest armed forces. It is a truism, however, that the increasing relevance of India to the Asia Pacific region is not an accepted fact by all the members of ASEAN. India's formal association was held up for sometime by some members who tried to play the Pakistani card. They have not relented as yet. First, some feared that India's admission would inevitably lead to the induction of Pakistan and the two traditional enemies would vitiate ASEAN's atmosphere.

Malaysia and Indonesia played down the Indian request. These two countries are still trying to induct Pakistan,

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but their say is likely to be diluted when new members are admitted. It is on the cards that by the beginning of next year, Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar will be made full members. Some questions are being raised about the incompatible economic fundamentals between the existing members like Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, Brunei and Vietnam.

It is true these former Indo-chinese states are poor. At the same time, they are trying to repair their economies with help from Japan and the US. India has already established some presence in Vietnam, but there are greater opportunities in these once closed markets India's political relations with these countries has been excellent. This could improve India's stock within ASEAN. Vietnam is already counting on India to share military expertise, especially what India learnt from the Soviet Union.

The present Russian government is firm about being paid for its services, something Vietnam cannot do. India has already established an understanding on defence matters with Malaysia and Indonesia. Both these countries have to pay more for their defence as the US withdraws its physical military presence in Asia. Singapore made a dramatic gesture by offering to train Indian air force pilots and station its F16 aircraft in India. Even though India did not take up Singapore's offer, there are other areas of cooperation.

India can be said to have arrived as a partner in the development of the Asia Pacific region. India's eastward destiny in the past was a casualty of political opportunism. Today India is unlikely to repeat its past mistakes.

India: Article—Indian Security Greater Priority Than Trade

BK1008143296 Delhi THE PIONEER in English 10 Aug 96 p 8

[Article by Jaya Jaitly]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Indian Foreign Minister's first important visit outside India was, fittingly, in the Asian region itself, where India participated as a full dialogue partner in ASEAN. From NAM [Nonaligned Movement] to SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] and now ASEAN, international formations and strategic alliances are undergoing fundamental changes in the post Cold War scenario. While western economic domination is a commonly perceived factor, its acceptance, containment or rejection are matters of fine tuning depending on the size and nature of government in each of the Asian countries.

For the first time India and Myanmar [Burma] will also be playing their role as new members of the ASEAN Regional Forum. Mr Gujral, therefore, will have ample occasion and opportunity to discuss issues of far-reaching consequences vis-a-vis Myanmar and India.

With the installation of the United Front Government we see a dose of fresh enthusiasm for the dictates of the multinationals in the market place, notwithstanding all the token tub thumping by the left comrades. Strangely, their brothers-in-arms Chinese, and their alleged foes, the MNCs [multinational corporations], are today influencing the politics of Myanmar; both in their own way, strengthening the grip and power of the ruling military junta, the SLORC. [State Law and Order Restoration Council]

As a participant in the International convention for the Restoration of Democracy in Myanmar which was held in New Delhi in January, 1996, Mr Gujral offered a deeply researched and greatly perceptive presentation before a distinguished audience of political and social activists, academicians, Legal experts and human rights groups from Myanmar, USA, Thailand, Korea, UK and Europe. The thrust of his address was the encircling of India by China and how India's security interests were jeopardised because of the link between the SLORC and the Chinese Government. While at the time of the convention Mr Gujral was merely a Janata Dal member of the Rajya Sabha, any information now provided by his Ministry must surely corroborate and augment his earlier arguments.

It would be both personally and intellectually dishonest if Mr Gujral were to now reverse his views on India's national interests and security concerns because everyone is now a part of the cosy club of ASEAN.

ASEAN has decided that it will not interfere in the internal affairs of member countries and believes that its "constructive engagement policy" has helped the release of Aung San Suu Kyi last year from house arrest. Daw Suu Kyi on the other hand, has been calling for sanctions against Myanmar since any policy of engagement in trade only strengthens the illegal and highly oppressive military rule. The European Parliament, USA, Japan, New Zealand and Australia are indicating responsiveness to her plea, whereas ASEAN seems to be getting into a defensive North-South syndrome in which Asians are sought to be mobilized to protect the "Asian way" in rather questionable areas. While it is not just necessary but imperative to resist the economic domination of Western led market forces such as the bullying over CTBT [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty] and back door protectionism by the West

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through raising of social clauses, we cannot carry it to the illogical and immoral extreme of defending our right to transgress universally accepted norms of human rights. Asian countries are also rather complacent if not actually proud of the supposed Asian characteristic of corruption. Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore do not enjoy democracy as we know it and we cannot prefer to run sweat shops without conforming to labour rights. Our advantage of cheap labour cannot be at the expense of human rights, which include minimum wages, safety norms, controlled work hours and other facilities such as toilets and creches.

Myanmar is today building roads for China up to India's border with free prison labour who are political prisoners, often in their early teens, who have their legs bound in chains as they work. Despite the Karenni, Mon and Kachin areas are being forced to accept "development" though "constructive engagement" and the number of refugees fleeing from these areas to Thailand increases every day. [sentence as published]

Amnesty International has said in its recently published report that incidents of oppression have increased markedly since November, 1995. The purpose of softening the generals or benefitting the common people through "constructive engagement" have not been achieved at all. If ASEAN wishes to chat up the generals in the belief that this strengthens democracy then democracy in Asia will have to be redefined in the same way as Asian corruption and Asian transgression of human rights are sarcastically termed by western commentators as part of "Asian values and culture."

For India, security interests must come before trade interests. The recently revived southern silk route from China to Myanmar has a thousand trucks playing everyday, certainly not carrying spices and silk like old times. Myanmar has given China a four kilometer square enclave in its territory from where the Chinese stock and distribute their goods. China has admitted to providing twelve F-7 jet fighters, the Chinese version of MIG-21, six naval patrol boats and a number of smaller naval boats, One hundred light and medium tanks and armored carriers, twenty five to thirty anti-aircraft guns, mortars, rocket launchers and a large quantity of small weapons. Nearly half of this had been supplied by 1990, and the total of 2 billion dollars worth must have been completed by now.

China's well known old urge to have direct access to warm waters are on the way to being fulfilled with roads and strategic bridges being prepared through Myanmar. Myanmar has permitted Chinese naval presence on an island in the Irrawady River and also China has expanded its naval facilities on the Coco Islands very close to the Andamans. Is this for "Asian stability", or the containment of India?

Myanmar's defence expenditure is 60 percent of its budget and its army has touched the half a million mark, bigger than Thailand or Indonesia. China finances this. In fact it is the strategic and economic control of Myanmar by China that should be India's primary concern.

India: Kashmir Elections—Islamic Group Issues Threats

BK1208161896 Hong Kong AFP in English 1544 GMT 12 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] SRINAGAR, India, Aug 12 (AFP) — An Islamic separatist group on Monday [12 August] said it would kill all the candidates planning to contest the upcoming state legislative polls in the troubled Indian state of Kashmir.

The Jammu and Kashmir Islamic Harkat-ul-Momneel (Islamic Action of Devotees) in a statement here warned all candidates to withdraw before August 21 or else "they will be done to death according to Islamic laws.

"No one shall be allowed to construct a political empire on the graveyards of thousands of martyrs who have laid their lives for the cause of independence," the statement said.

The militant Muslim group, which has claimed responsibility for a May 21 bomb blast in New Delhi that killed 13 persons, also called on all government employees not to participate in the elections.

"All government employees are warned to desist from engaging themselves in election duties," the statement said. "In case anybody dares to do so he will be shot dead.

"The transport operators are also warned not to take part in elections and are directed to observe a strike from August 22 to September 21 and if they violate this they will be killed," the statement added.

The group issued the same threat during the May parliamentary polls in Kashmir, but did not carry out their threats.

Elections to the state assembly will be held on September 7, 16, 21 and 30 in Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority state, for the first time in seven years.

Muslim separatist groups, whose campaign to end Indian rule over Kashmir has caused more than 12,000 deaths since 1989, have called for a poll boycott.

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India: Minister Notes Determination To Hold Kashmir Elections

BK1308044496 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 13 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The home minister, Mr. Indrajit Gupta, has said that the government is determined to complete the election process in Jammu and Kashmir despite Pakistan's desperate attempts to sabotage the program. Speaking at a meet-the-press program at Thrissur in Kerala, he said the possibility of Pakistan encouraging a proxy war in the state cannot be ruled out. The home minister asserted that all efforts will be made to create a congenial atmosphere for more people to exercise their franchise. Expressing concern over the spread of corruption in public life, the home minister felt that it cannot be controlled by administrative measures alone. He said there should be a people's movement, including vigilance committees to curb corruption. On TADA [Terrorism and Disruptive Activities Prevention Act] cases, Mr. Gupta said these are being reviewed one by one with the concurrence of various courts where such cases are being tried.

India: Minister on Holding Assembly Elections in Kashmir

BK1308092596 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 13 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The minister of state for home, Mohammad Maqbul Dar, has said that the government is keen to ensure the participation of all political parties, including the Hurriyyat Conference, in the coming assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir. Talking to our correspondent in Srinagar today, Mr. Dar said that this is necessary in the interest of the people of Kashmir and the country. He said every step will be taken to ensure free and fair polls. Mr. Dar said that though the security environment in Kashmir has improved, utmost vigilance needs to be adopted in view of Pakistan's frantic attempts to disturb the polling process in the state.

Meanwhile, a team of Janata Dal leaders arrived in Srinagar today to hold discussions with local leaders. The team will submit its report to the Political Affairs Committee of the party. The team includes Mr. Sharad Yadav, Mr. Ram Vilas Paswan, and Mr. Wasim Ahmad.

The All India Minorities Front has decided to contest all the 87 seats in Jammu and Kashmir and 425 seats in Uttar Pradesh in the coming assembly elections in the two states. The front's president, S.M. Asif, said this in Jammu. This is the first time that the front is contesting elections. Mr. Asif told reporters that the manifesto for the elections is being finalized and it has been proposed to reserve 36 percent seats for women. Mr. Asif said nothing has been decided yet on forging an alliance with any political party in Jammu and Kashmir, but the option is open.

India: Chief of Kashmir Militant Outfit Killed in Encounter

BK1308050796 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 13 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Jammu and Kashmir, a self-styled chief of the Hizbul Mujahideen was killed during an encounter with the security forces at Bhadarwah. Some arms and ammunition and one wireless set were recovered from the site of the encounter. Meanwhile, three hardcore militants, including a self-styled tehsil [revenue district] commander of the Hizbul Mujahideen surrendered before the security forces in Doda District yesterday along with arms and ammunition. In another incident, eight Army jawans [soldiers], including one officer and one JCO [Junior Commanding Officer] were killed in a bus accident in Punch District yesterday.

India: Paper Reports Congress-I MP's Want To Join Government

BK1008124596 Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English 10 Aug 96

[By DECCA HERALD News Service—received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] NEW DELHI, Aug 9. Much against the wishes of Congress-I President P V Narasimha Rao, his detractors in the party are understood to be making a renewed bid to join the United Front government led by Mr H D Deve Gowda.

Sources in the anti-Rao camp said on being goaded by former Maharashtra chief minister Sharad Pawar, younger party MP's close to him are contemplating a fresh signature drive amongst party MP's to endorse a proposal for converting the outside support of the party into a Congress-I-United Front coalition. Though the detractors gave up the recent anti-Rao signature campaign midway for want of enough support, this time they are confident of getting enough backing to pressure Mr Rao to relent on the coalition proposal.

Their confidence stems from the belief that the former prime minister is being increasingly isolated from party MP's in the wake of his various legal battles, particularly the Lakhubhai Pathak case hearing in the Supreme Court, which is slated for August 12. The sources also contend that of late Mr Rao's close supporters, too, are increasingly veering towards the idea of joining the Gowda government in an expanded coalition. Although

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Mr Gowda has left it to the Congress-I leadership to decide whether or not the party should join the government, he has nevertheless kept the doors open for a coalition. As if to prove this, the sources point out after three rounds of expansion of his ministry, Mr Gowda has pegged its size to under 40 only with a view to accommodate the Congress-I if and when the party decides to join the government. It is well known that Mr Pawar is keen on becoming deputy prime minister.

The detractors, moreover, point out that the Congress Working Committee's decision to support the efforts to form a secular coalition against the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] can be reinforced if the party joins the government. For, the government is far from acquiring a settled look in the face of rumblings within the 13-party United Front coalition. Notwithstanding its commitment to keep the BJP out, the CPI-M [Communist Party of India], the largest Left component of the Front, is of late voicing its criticism of the style of functioning of the government. Of all people, West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu chose to air such criticism earlier this week.

Though a partner in the government, the CPI [Communist Party of India] too has intensified its criticism of the government on a number of issues. And now comes the threat by the TDP [Telugu Desam Party] to reconsider its support to the government over its disagreement on the Almatti dam issue. It needs to be mentioned that TDP supremo and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu is also the United Front convener.

However, while his detractors perceive in these developments the need to impart stability to the Gowda Government, Mr Rao is learnt to have discussed the current political situation with a view to formulate the party's strategic response to it. Sources in the AICC-I [All India Congress Committee-I] today said this issue inter alia was discussed at the meeting of party office-bearers this morning. The discussions took place against the backdrop of Mr Rao's recent meeting with Janata Dal President and Bihar Chief Minister Laloo Prasad Yadav.

Following the meeting, Congress-I General Secretary Devendra Dwivedi dismissed suggestions that the party was closer to a decision on joining the government. Briefing mediapersons, Mr Dwivedi said: "The party is not contemplating to join the government." He indicated that the a meeting of the CWC [Congress Working Committee] might be held in the near future to discuss various political issues, as also the party strategy for the Assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh.

India: Congress Not Contemplating to Join Deve Gowda Government

BK1008104696 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 9 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Indian National Congress says it is not contemplating to join the Deve Gowda government at the center.

Talking to newspersons in New Delhi today, the party general secretary, Mr. Devendra Dwevedi, did not comment on the recent meetings between Mr. Narasimha Rao and the Bihar chief minister, Mr. Lalu Prasad Yadav. Referring to the Uttar Pradesh assembly elections, he said meetings between the Congress and the Bahujan Samaj Party will begin from next week to discuss seat adjustments. About Jammu and Kashmir elections, Mr. Dwevedi said it has not yet been decided whether the party will go it alone or have an alliance with other parties in the state.

India: CPI-M Opposes Disinvestment of Public Sector Units

BK1008104996 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 9 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxist] today asked the United Front government to stick to the commitments made in the Common Minimum Program to strengthen public sector units [PSUs]. In a statement issued in New Delhi today, the Politburo of the party said the process of disinvestment being planned is not acceptable as it follows the same path taken by the previous government. The party expressed strong opposition to the listing of profitable concerns like the ONGC [Oil and Natural Gas Commission], VSNL [Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited], and Indian Oil among the PSUs for the disinvestment of shares.

India: Andhra Minister Warns of 'Serious Steps' Against Government

BK1008085196 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1530 GMT 8 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The ruling Telugu Desam [Party in Andhra Pradesh state] which is a constituent of the United Front has objected to the sanction of 200 crore rupees to Karnataka by the center. The money has been sanctioned for early completion of the upper Krishna [river] project which includes the controversial Almatti dam. The state irrigation minister, Mr. K. Sivaprasada, told our correspondent, E. Krishna Rao, in Hyderabad this evening that the center chose to earmark a substantial portion of the newly created rapid irrigation

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scheme fund at a time when a meeting of both the chief ministers on the Almatti dam was due.

[Begin Sivaprasada recording] We feel [words indistinct] of giving financial assistance to complete the project [words indistinct] new scheme in the union government. That is why we are asking, we have written a letter to the government, the Government of India and the prime minister saying to stop the financial assistance (?forthwith). Before it is given, it should be discussed thoroughly with the two states; then only you can give. And day after tomorrow, they are going to have a steering committee meeting of the United Front government. There we want to raise the issue and see that we should be done justice. Otherwise, we are going to take serious steps for our justice and for our state's interest and for our farmers' interests. [end recording]

India: Article Laments Cuts in Defense Spending

BK0908144396 Delhi BUSINESS STANDARD in English 9 Aug 96 p 9

[Article by Prem Shankar: "Criminal Neglect of Defence Spending"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In politically correct circles it is fashionable to plead for an increase in the defence budget, for that puts one right in the middle of the RSS [Rashtyiya Swayamsewak Sangh]-BJP's [Bharatiya Janata Party] saffron brigade. But this nettle must now be grasped. In the past three months, India has come under immense pressure to sign the not-so-Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Thanks to the 'entry-into-force' clause being insisted upon by Britain, Russia and China, possibly as a cover for their own reservations about signing the treaty, India will soon be forced to block the treaty. This will be the signal for the international, very largely western, media to brand India a pariah among nations. Editorials like two in the Washington Post in recent days, which label led India a spoiler and a hypocrite, will multiply.

It is impossible to foretell where all this could lead to. But what is beyond doubt is that India has run out of soft options, and will have to rely on its own resources if it wishes to assert its independence. While the main prop of a nation's independence is undoubtedly its economic strength, this is no substitute for a strong and credible defence establishment. India does not as yet have a self-reliant economy. And after nine successive reductions in the ratio of defence spending to GDP, India no longer has even a credible conventional defence. Its strong posture at Geneva therefore rings hollow. Not only is it the fourth most heavily indebted nation in the world, but it has today at best half an army.

From 1963, in the immediate aftermath of the Sino-Indian border war, till the early '80s, Indian governments spent a consistent 3.3 to 3.5 per cent of the GDP on defence. While this was by no means high, being roughly half of what Pakistan and China were spending during the same period, it sufficed to meet India's minimum needs. In the middle and late '80s, the ratio rose to a peak of 3.9 per cent because of a long overdue programme for modernising the armed forces. Once this was substantially completed, the ratio sank back to the historical 3.5 per cent in 1989-90, India's last good year before the collapse of the command economy.

The decline during the crisis and the subsequent years of economic reform, has been, to put it bluntly, catastrophic. In nominal terms, defence spending grew from Rs [rupees] 14,416 crore in 1989-90 to Rs 26,879 crore in 1995-96. But since the GDP in current prices rose during the same period from Rs 408,662 crore to Rs 1,087,000 crore, the ratio of defence spending fell from 3.53 per cent of the GDP in 1991-92 and 1992-93. In the latter year, the ratio of defence to GDP was 2.79 per cent. If India achieves a 7 per cent growth rate this year, if inflation is held at 6 per cent and if defence expenditure does not exceed budget estimates, it could fall further to a paltry 2.31 per cent in 1996-97.

Even these figures do not tell the full story of how the defence services have been starved into impotence. During the six years under review, the external value of the rupee fell from Rs 16.65 to the dollar to Rs 33.18. This has had a direct effect on all defence equipment purchases, and to a lesser extent on its purchases of ammunition and other consumables. India buys 70 per cent of its defence equipment abroad, and the import content of even the remaining 30 per cent is fairly high. Thus if one adjusts 80 per cent of the expenditure of defence equipment for the 50 per cent fall in the rupee value between 1989-90 and 1995-96, the real fall in defence expenditure in directly comparable terms has been from 3.53 per cent to 2.22 per cent of the GDP.

How have the defence services coped with this starvation? The answers are far from reassuring. On the surface they managed to protect their expenditure on equipment and armaments: this went for the 27.2 per cent of total spending ill 1989-90 to 28 per cent in 1992-93, and 28.6 per cent in 1995-96. But after adjusting both total and equipment outlays, the share of the latter fell steeply to just 20.6 per cent of defence outlays in 199596 on a comparable basis to 1989-90. As a proportion of GDP, therefore, India is spending less than half as much on armaments now as it did in 1989-90.

The other area where the axe has fallen heavily is defence stores. These include all consumables, from

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food, uniforms and shoes to truck tyres, tank treads and ammunition. The share of spending on stores has fallen from 41.1 per cent in 1989-90 to 29 per cent in 1995-96. Since the army has not been scaled down, and since it is most unlikely that food rations have been reduced, one must conclude that nearly all the economies have fallen on ammunition and consumables used up during normal exercises.

There is a third area where economies have been forced on the armed forces not so much by the budget cuts as by the rules governing the payment of salaries. The salaries of jawans are protected against increases in the cost of living. But as in the administrative services, those of the officer corps are only partially protected. The real income of the officers has therefore been dropping even while the demands that the nation has been placing on the army in particular, in places as far flung as Sri Lanka, Somalia, Assam, Punjab and Kashmir, have been rising relentlessly. At the same time, job opportunities in civilian life have blossomed.

The inevitable has therefore happened. There is only so much that a country can ask of its people. In India this limit was reached a few years ago. Today all the three defence forces are finding it exceedingly difficult to retain their officers and, in spite of lowering their entrance requirements, are unable to attract new recruits. As a result, out of 35,000 positions in the officer corps of the army 12,000 have remained unfilled for years.

So what kind of Army does India have today? It is one in which one-third of the officers are missing and their jobs are being done by JCOs promoted from the ranks; it is an army which does not dare to hold more than the minimum of training exercises for fear of using up the ordnance that might be needed at any moment. The same holds for the navy and the air force. Lastly, India's armed services have not held a single combined three-service exercise for nine years. The only joint exercises they have held have been on the computer.

As finance minister, Mr Chidambaram would do well to remember first, that giving the armed forces more money after a crisis occurs will not enable them to fight better, and second, that cutting the fiscal deficit by reducing defence expenditure is like cutting one's nose to spite one's face.

India: Concern Expressed Over Pakistan-Ukraine Tank Deal

BK1008103996 Madras THE HINDU in English 9 Aug 96 p 11

[Report by Atul Ameja]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan's largest ever tank deal in recent history is causing considerable concern in defence circles here. Islamabad's agreement with Ukraine to beef up its stocks of arm has intensified the debate on effective countermeasures.

"The over 300 tanks from Ukraine which Pakistan will get will erode India's edge in the arm our arena. But more importantly, it implies that Indian army's ability to deter an attack, based on its armour and air superiority diminishes. This is where our real concerns lie", a highly placed source said.

Only larger inductions of the Arjun Main Battle Tank, acquisition of the Russian origin T-72S tanks and an acceleration of the indigenous anti-tank missile programme can counter the planned Pakistani inductions. More tank busting attack helicopters may also be urgently required.

According to sources, Pakistan is likely to add around four to five regiments of the T-80 UD tanks, beefing up its "offensive punch." "The Pakistani arm our was so far based on the old M-47 and M-48 tanks. A regiment of old T-55 also existed. The Chinese had provided the T-69 and T-85 tanks. The Pakistanis were thus on the look-out, and thus grabbed the Ukrainian offer of a tank at about six to seven crores a piece", the sources said.

The funding for the nearly $550 million deal is unlikely to place a fresh burden on the Pakistani exchequer. The refund for the cancelled F-16 deal with the U.S. is likely to generate the cash.

Unlike the other variants of the T-80, the T-80 UD is powered by a diesel engine, and this gives it a distinct advantage on the battlefield. "The D in the UD stands for diesel, and this is important as the gas turbine engine in the other variants of the T-80 can suck in the fine sand of the Thar desert, making them unsuitable in the desert theatre of the subcontinent."

Sources here suspect that Pakistan will get the tanks in two phases. A variant of the T-72S, already mothballed by the Ukrainians and rechristened by them as the T-80 could go first. This has a 840 hp engine, which is more powerful than the T-72 tanks licence produced in India. "The Ukrainians are downsizing their defence forces and have enough surplus stocks which they can immediately sell to third countries. The Pakistanis could be benefiting from this," the sources observed.

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But, later tank consignments in the phased deal to Pakistan could have the more powerful 1000hp engines, developed by the Ukrainians recently.

Supply of spares by the Ukrainians for these tanks is unlikely to become an insurmountable problem. "The Ukrainians have the infrastructure and the skills to build the spares. All they need is the money to carry this out. Payments by Pakistan is likely to erase this deficiency", the sources added. The T-80 UD tank can fire a variety of 125 mm wide shells as well as missiles, making it a potent tank.

Pakistan is likely to place the T-80s in the Multan sector where its one armoured division is located. The tanks are likely to be used more in desert warfare and not so much in the riverine stretches of Punjab. "It is the area South of Ferozepur which offers space for classic tank manoeuvres, requiring deployment of sophisticated tanks", the sources said. The nearly 20 km, cramped, but strategically vital stretch around Pathankot offers scope only for high volume exchange of fire, for which highly specialised tanks may not be required.

According to sources, a cash strapped India will now have to pull something out of the bag to counter the Pakistani initiative. The planned induction of around 100 Arjun tanks in the Ninth Five Year Plan alone will be highly insufficient. Besides, replacements have also to be found for the ageing Vijayanta and T-55 tanks as well, making it a high priority area. "The T-72S could be an effective alternative to the Vijayanta and the T-55 tanks, without making an addition to the arm our stockpile", the sources said.

The project to modernise the already existing T-72 tanks, the backbone of Indian arm our at present, has also to be pushed to arrest the down slide. Moreover an acceleration of the project to make the sophisticated "Nag" anti-tank projectile, capable of piercing the most advanced arm ours, will now be indispensable, if the Pakistani challenge is to be effectively met.

India: Disposal Squads Use Robots To Pick Up Bombs on Border

BK0908144896 Delhi THE PIONEER in English 9 Aug 96 p 6

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Hi-tech explosive disposal squads are being activated in all the Indian Air Force bases lined along the Indo-Pak border to defuse enemy bombs during wartime.

The system called the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Equipment, has both human and robotic elements. Each package includes a robot which picks up live bombs; several sensitive detectors to locate bomb sites and a bomb suit to be worn by an airman trained to defuse bombs picked up by the robot.

According to the Air Force officials, these squads would be of immense help if enemy planes manage to bomb air strips or blast pens where combat aircraft are parked. They point out that every bomb has a built-in time lag so that the aircraft dropping it can escape the impact of the explosion. This crucial time can be utilised by the team to detect the bomb, which is not an easy task as it makes a deep crater on impact, pick it up with the robot and then defuse it.

Many a time, the bombs fail to explode and it becomes difficult to locate them as they are buried. The squad, with its sophisticated sensors, can detect the spots and guide the robot to pick up the hazardous bombs.

The three main components of the system are manufactured separately in Ireland, Germany, Canada and Britain.

The first component of the squad is its safety equipment, consisting of a bomb disposal suit, a bomb blanket and a Hobo Robotic Vehicle with remote control. The suit, made in Canada, protects the operator from pressure, fragmentation, impact and heat. It has several layers, the most important being the vest which is kept cool by a plastic tube pumping in water from a large thermas attached to the suit.

The suit is designed to protect the wearer in case the bomb explodes while being diffused.

The bomb blankets are used for defusing smaller explosives while the robotic vehicle, manufactured in Ireland, is used in a hostile environment like an enemy attack to pick up bomblets and IEDs [improvised explosive device].

The most critical segment of this squad is the search and locating equipment which comprises a metal mine detector which can locate any metal object hidden in the ground or shallow water; a bomb locater and an electronic stethoscope which can monitor electronic or mechanical time delay devices fitted on enemy bombs.

The third component has a rocket wrench which can be used by the operator to unscrew wide range of fuses and pistols from unexploded bombs by remote operations. The Disarmer and Disruptor, another equipment, is capable of destroying the fusing system of unexploded bombs.

The Air Force officials said their long-term plan is to induct such squads at all the air defence ages in the nation.

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Iran

Iran: Lawsuit Contesting U.S. Bills Submitted to The Hague Court

LD1208212896 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 12 Aug 96

[Statement by Hasan Zarif, Iranian deputy foreign minister in charge of international affairs in Tehran on 12 August — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. As you know, the U.S. Government has clearly violated international laws during the past few months by ratifying two bills, which were then signed by the U.S. President.

The first was a bill allocating $20 million for sabotage in Iran. This was ratified by the Congress and later signed by the U.S. President in the Iranian months of Azar-Day [winter 1995].

The second was the secondary sanctions against companies in partnership with Iran in the spheres of oil and energy. This was signed recently by the U.S. President. However, as an illegal action, it has come to face severe international protests.

The two laws clearly violate the principles of international law and contradict the various articles of the Algiers Accord, which was signed between Iran and the United States. The accord in fact sets the agreed obligations for the United States, the first article and the first note in particular, according to which the U.S. Government is obliged to refrain from interference in the internal affairs of Iran.

Both laws — the one allocating $20 million for sabotage in Iran and the one interfering in Iran's economy — contradict U.S. obligations in terms of the Algiers Accord and other agreements.

Today Iran submitted its initial petition to the Iran-U.S. tribunal at The Hague, which was established in 1980 to investigate cases in which the Algiers Accord has been violated. The complaint is put to the tribunal as a legal dispute and the U.S. Government is obliged, according to the Algiers Accord, to reply. Then the tribunal will begin to study the Iranian complaint.

The U.S. action is an interference in Iran's domestic affairs and a clear violation of the Algiers agreement. It is a case of extraterritorial legislation by a domestic institution.

As you know, the sanctions provoked the opposition of many countries, because they constitute a dangerous precedent, and because they are seen to violate U.S. obligations toward Iran.

Iran: Official Says Clinton Trying To 'Universalize' U.S. 'Domestic Rules'

LD1108164496 Tehran IRNA in English 0701 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Aug. 11, IRNA — The United States must realize that internationally accepted laws related to the World Trade Organization (WTO) are independent from the domestic rules and regulations adopted by Washington, stressed Foreign Ministry Spokesman Mahmud Mohammadi.

In an interview with the English-language 'TEHRAN TIMES' printed Sunday [11 August], Mohammadi said, "U.S. President Bill Clinton is seeking in vain to universalize his country's domestic rules and make the world obey them."

Through the tightening of sanctions against Iran, Washington intended to exert its influence over other countries and make them submit to its political hegemony in the aftermath of the Cold War, he noted, adding that the U.S. was doing all it could to control the world's strategic energy resources and use them as leverage against its rivals, the EU and Japan.

He said the U.S. was well aware that its accusations were unfounded and that the sanctions would not decrease Iran's oil revenues.

The official further underlined that in the present international system, independent countries, as those in the EU, which has emerged as a major international economic powerhouse, are not willing to jeopardize their national interests for the sake of internal rivalries in the U.S. and the insatiable demands of Washington.

Iran: Daily Says Clinton's Sanctions Law Shows Signs of Desperation

LD1008122296 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 5 Aug 96 p2

[Unattributed editorial: "Beware of Clinton's Desperation"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Bill Clinton is due to sign a law today strengthening the U.S. embargo against Iran and Libya. The law would impose sanctions on foreign companies which invest more than $40 million a year in Iran's and Libya's oil and gas industries.

According to reports Clinton will also deliver a speech today throwing light on the reasons for his administration's action against Iran and Libya.

The fact is that the measure which becomes law today, is contrary to all international laws and norms. To justify its immature actions the Clinton administration has tried

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to prepare the international public opinion through a misleading and false information campaign.

The new law also manifests President Clinton's ever increasing desperation. The U.S. President was disappointed with the response from his European allies who candidly refused to join his administration's unilateral economic embargo imposed on the Islamic Republic in June last year.

Another indication of Clinton's desperation is the inordinate amount of noise made by his Defense Secretary William Perry who, according to the Western media reports, made inconsistent and contradictory statements on Friday [2 August] and Saturday [3 August] in which he tried to involve Iran in the June 25 bombing of a U.S. military housing complex in Saudi Arabia.

Earlier, in the March 13 summit at the Egyptian resort of Sharm al-Shaykh, Clinton tried again to convince his European allies to accompany him in his anti-Iranian chorus, but received a big no from them.

The May 31 victory of the Likud Party in Israel was the greatest setback for Clinton as rightist Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu blocked the Middle East peace process for which the U.S. President invested all his political capital.

That was not the end of his political setbacks. He received another blow in Lyon, France in the June summit of the G-7 plus Russia where the European allies made it clear that they were against isolating Iran and would continue their critical dialogue with Tehran.

Then on July 30, foreign and security ministers of the same group met in Paris where the American delegate was not even allowed to present his country's rhetoric. The ministers judiciously decided on a 25-point concrete measures for combating terrorism rather than slapping economic embargos.

Considering the absolute failure of the United States to isolate and weaken Iran, there are two options open to the White House. It could indulge in military adventurism against Tehran, for which Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati, most appropriately, has alerted the United Nations to take immediate action.

The level of alertness of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic should be upgraded to give a befitting response to the probable aggressor. One should expect all kinds of irrationalities and absurdities from a U.S. President in an election year.

Washington could also try to make a regional country, or countries, a scapegoat and blame them for falsely accusing the Islamic Republic. We hope and expect that no regional country would be a party to U.S. dirty tricks.

Iran: Daily Asks 'Can Clinton Save Himself?'

LD1008131096 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 6 Aug 96 p 2

[Unattributed Editorial: "The Iranian Connection: Can Clinton Save Himself?"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The bill that seeks to punish non-American companies that invest $40 million or more a year in Iran or Libya's oil or gas sectors was signed by President Clinton yesterday. The notorious bill named after its sponsor, Republican senator Alfonso D'Amato, is actually a follow-up of the failed unilateral economic embargo imposed by the U.S. on Iran in June, 1995.

The bill, already a law as of this writing, is another desperate attempt on the part of Washington to beef up its sagging image abroad as a loser in its fight against terrorism. Unable to explain growing domestic terrorist activities such as that which is suspected at the Atlanta games, it now seeks to point to masterminds abroad.

But the U.S. has again deceived itself by thinking that it can still convince its international partners to rally behind its unilateral moves. The fact is that America's reputation as a "bully" is already so notorious as to render its credibility gap beyond repair. While it used to be the only country capable of acting on its own without being held accountable for its actions in the international arena, it is now a pariah even amongst its Western allies.

To prove the point, European Union members have responded unbelievably fast to the D'Amato bill. France has warned of "reprisals." In the words of Yves Doutriaux, French foreign ministry spokesman, "France is determined that no French interests will be affected and that the cause for any damage will not remain unanswered."

The British Foreign Office in a statement on Monday [5 August] said, "We have vigorously lobbied against this legislation both bilaterally and with our European Union Partners." The statement also called on the Britain's EU partners to consult urgently on considering retaliatory measures against the U.S.

The D'Amato bill, now signed into law, is intrinsically silly from the standpoint of international law. However, from the standpoint of implementation alone, how can a local law be enforced abroad? It is to be presumed, of course, that in cases of violation, the U.S. will have to seek redress from an international tribunal, wherever that may be. Will that international tribunal be obliged to take up its cause, especially a political one?

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But France and, certainly other European Union members, refuse to be bound by the D'Amato law because it clearly contravenes the principles of the WTO and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

The WTO was born out of a common international desire to foster free trade and to isolate countries that impose unilateral restrictions and thus impede this objective. From this standpoint alone, the U.S. should therefore be expelled from the WTO. The D'Amato bill, from the standpoint of the least harm that it can do to the international community, will be setting up a dangerous precedent for the progress of international commerce.

As U.S. presidential elections draw near, President Clinton flouts his record as being a good manager of his country's economy. Resilient as he may be and notwithstanding his Whitewater troubles, deep inside, Clinton actually suffers from insecurity in the face of a stalled Middle East peace process and the inability to deal with suspected terrorist countries.

It is no wonder U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry has pointed to a possible "Iranian connection" in the Saudi Arabia bombing and alerted its Saudi friends to beware of another bombing attack. The 17 July crash of the TWA plane from New York becomes just another excuse for a failed policy.

The world should know by now where the true source of paranoia is. It is useless to continue making allegations. It is high time those allegations are proven and rumormongering be laid at rest.

Iran: Commentary Views Reasons Behind D'Amato Law

LD1008215096 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 7 Aug 96 p 2

[Unattributed commentary: "The $40 Million Ploy"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Experience suggests and reason and logic also dictate that any limit or boundary that a legislator includes in a law arises from some cause or reason. For example, if a law stipulates a certain age limit for a certain legal or economic activity and forbids people below a certain age to carry out certain activities, the reasons and causes for such a decision must be sought in the prevailing customs and habits of the society, and the people's familiarity with those limits and customs. If a law sets a certain minimum level, exempting people from tax, the roots of this must be sought in the policies on social justice and support for underprivileged groups.

Now, however, that the bill known as the D'Amato law, intensifying the economic sanctions on our country and Libya, has been signed by Clinton, the curious mind allows itself the right to ask and wish to know why a limit of $40 million has been set in the bill for transactions with Iran and Libya. On what basis and for what reason did the legislators who approved it make such a decision?

The fact of the matter is that both of the countries subject to this sanction — regardless of the effects of such sanctions in the past — are oil exporting countries. It is also the case that both these countries have naturally taken into account their potential oil and gas reserves for the purpose of development and growth — and so they should.

The third point, however, is that the complicated oil industry not only requires major investment at the beginning, but it also requires vast amounts of constant investment for covering a certain amount of wear and tear, restructuring, upgrading, and maintaining the extraction, production, refining, and distribution systems. In other words, those countries that still intend to continue exporting their fossil fuel must not only constantly spend part of their income in this field on investment and consume it so to speak, but they have it in their interest, for their own peace of mind and to ensure that the production line will not stop, to attract and use investment in finding new fields and making extraction economical at fields that have not been economical until now.

Now, if we bear in mind the point that, in exchange for every single barrel of crude oil that is to be produced each day, based on average calculations, $5,000 must be invested in on-shore fields and much more than this in off-shore fields, and that, in addition to this, in the best circumstances, this investment will not yield results before five years; we can gradually deduce the reasons and causes for the decision to impose a $40 million ceiling on transactions by economic companies with Iran and Libya.

The point is that the aim of the people who drew up the so-called D'Amato law, intensifying the sanctions on us and Libya, is not to deprive Western companies from profits on their transactions with us. Their real intention is to dissuade those companies, in practice, from engaging in any serious work and cooperation with us on infrastructural economic activities, especially in the field of oil, by channelling and determining the direction of foreign transactions.

The ultimate aim of the strategy of the people who designed and approved this bill and a number of other bills is to make the relevant countries use their means and resources to the utmost for the continuation of their exports, to exhaust this vast sector of their economy in

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practice, and make it unusable, and, then, possibly to grant all their wishes.

Let us not forget that the White House strategists openly stated in the last days of World War II, in a note exchanged between the American State Department and the British Foreign Office: We wish to see an increase in the average exploitation of the oil reserves of the eastern hemisphere, especially the Middle East, to such an extent as to allow a considerable decrease in the exploitation of the crude oil of the western hemisphere, especially in the United States, so that we can keep it as a considerable reserve stock for the future. This strategy formed the main direction of their long term economic and political programs for years to come. In this same way, it should be noted that although the increase in the price of crude oil after the 1973 crisis seemed to benefit oil exporting countries, in practice, the outcome was that vast amounts of investments were absorbed into the untouched and plentiful fields of the West as a result of the unprecedented increase in the price of crude oil.

The remarks that are made by the likes of Perry or Gingrich will, undoubtedly, receive a response from our country's officials at the appropriate time. However, the quiet program-making of the economic strategists and their unstated aims must also not escape our analysts and thinkers, and suitable solutions must be found to their ploys at the right time.

Iran: Daily Interviews Head of British Muslims Concerning U.S. Sanctions

LD1108162696 Tehran IRNA in English 0631 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Aug. 11, IRNA -- The head of Britain's Muslim parliament, Ghiasuddin Siddiqi, accused President Bill Clinton of signing the plan for intensifying economic sanctions against Iran in order to secure more Zionist votes.

In an exclusive interview with the Persian daily IRAN printed Sunday [11 August], he said that such schemes against Islamic countries, especially the Islamic Republic of Iran, were masterminded and implemented according to the will of the Zionists.

Siddiqi, who is also the editor-in-chief of the Canada-based CRESCENT INTERNATIONAL, called on world Muslims to confront the anti-Iran plan of the U.S.

He said Islamic countries should condemn such interventionist schemes.

The head of Britain's Muslim parliament further stated that the American people should realize the implementation of such plans only favored Zionist interests and not the national interests of the U.S.

Pointing to the Islamic revolution as the triumph of Islam over blasphemy, he said that such a significant phenomenon encouraged the followers of Islam, especially those in Europe, to be proud of being Muslims.

Following the collapse of the bipolar system in the world, the U.S. needed to create a hypothetical enemy in order to perpetuate its hegemony over global energy resources.

The U.S. is also forging rivalries in order to sell its armaments and to find clients for its military products, he noted.

Therefore, Siddiqi added, the U.S. has been trying to misrepresent independent Islamic countries as enemies of the West and attempts to attribute any terrorist act happening anywhere in the world as having been committed by Muslims.

He stressed, however, that while the U.S. accuse Islamic countries of supporting terrorism, the fact is that Muslims themselves are the main victims of terroristic moves.

Iran: TEHRAN TIMES Views U.S. Interest in Persian Gulf Region

LD1108164096 Tehran IRNA in English 0927 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Aug. 11, IRNA — It is time that countries put an end to U.S. moves for total control of the Persian Gulf, an English-language daily stressing that the Persian Gulf should be defended as the bulwark of the Middle East interest.

"The Persian Gulf is not only the 'jugular vein' of regional countries, but it is also the lifeblood of the industrialized world," the TEHRAN TIMES wrote, adding that attempts to undermine the security of the region would be a blow to industrialized societies and have repercussions reaching other countries.

The presence of the U.S. in this sensitive region is not to safeguard the region's security, it underlined.

Washington's objectives are to control the region's oil as a leverage against newly merging economic rivals and to cultivate fear in the minds of regional rulers to make them more dependent on U.S. arms, reiterated the editorial.

Referring to the recent violation of Iranian airspace by U.S. forces, it remarked that this was intended once again to disturb regional security.

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It concluded, however, by underlining that Iran has proven itself quite capable of defending its interests, saying that the eight-year imposed war was proof of such capability.

Iran Clarifies Stand on Nuclear Disarmament Conference

LD1308110696 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 13 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The U.S. representative at the disarmament conference in Geneva claimed that India, Pakistan, and Iran oppose negotiations on banning the testing of nuclear weapons. This is under circumstances in which the Indian foreign minister repeatedly stressed that New Delhi will not sign the nuclear test ban treaty under pressure from the United States. India considers the treaty to be a reflection of the monopolistic wishes of the nuclear powers and it wants to see a schedule program for the disarmament of all the countries of the world.

Pakistan said: If India does not sign the disarmament treaty, Pakistan will not do so either. The Islamic Republic of Iran, for its part, wishes to see new negotiations because the Zionist regime has not been placed on the list of countries in the Middle East that must respect the treaty. Iran was one of the first countries to sign the nuclear nonproliferation treaty.

If the draft of the nuclear test ban treaty is approved, it will be sent to the UN General Assembly for approval.

Iran: Geneva Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Talks Viewed

NC1208064796 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 1 Aug 96 p 12

[Commentary by 'A. A. Niyamaneah: "The Behind-the-Scene Realities of the Nuclear Disarmament Pact"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The nuclear disarmament [as published] talks in Geneva were resumed on Monday [29 July] after a one month interruption. China, which was among the countries that had disagreed with the conditions of the draft nuclear disarmament pact, carried out its latest nuclear test a few hours before the commencement of the Geneva talks. It said it will halt these tests and will join the list of signatories of the pact.

Also, the Zionist regime, which had set conditions for signing the pact and had demanded some changes in a number of its articles, decided to forego its demands. [passage omitted]

Needless to say, the disagreements of India and, to a certain extent, China and some other countries stems from some regional political considerations and some global conditions. For example, China decided to join the signatories of the pact when it had reached a satisfactory point in its nuclear tests and had also assessed global conditions. The result of this was that China realized that solidarity with other countries — especially the nonaligned countries and the Third World, of which China considers itself to be the leader — was to its benefit.

As for India, regional problems, namely its differences with its neighbors, have convinced New Delhi to develop this technology and to oppose the contents of the draft pact.

Other issues too can also be listed in this regard, including the demands by some nonaligned countries, specifically the Islamic Republic of Iran. Iran's delegation at the previous talks requested that a record be compiled which would, in tandem with banning nuclear tests, envisage the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear technology for military purposes to other countries by the nuclear powers and would also envisage the gradual destruction of these weapons.

But the truth is that the nuclear countries, especially the Western camp, see the signing of the nuclear test ban treaty as a matter of rivalry with other countries. Thus, they have called for the imposition of restrictions on other countries with nuclear arms — countries like China and Russia.

By creating restrictions for China, Russia, and other countries with a nuclear technology, the nuclear countries are trying to monopolize this advanced and complicated technology. This is because if these tests continue, countries that do not yet have the means to develop this technology because of financial reasons or who have less nuclear weapons' capability would try to raise their know-how to Western levels.

At any rate, the big nuclear powers and the signatories of the nuclear disarmament pact should bear in mind the fact that maintaining their nuclear arsenals will not prevent other countries from gaining access to nuclear technology. Therefore, they should realize that the nuclear powers want use of this pact to put pressure on countries that differ with their policies. And at the same time that the West is pressuring some countries, the Zionist regime and its more than 100 nuclear bombs and missiles remain hidden from Western political circles.

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Iran: Turkish Premier's Visit Signals 'New Trend' in Relations

LD1108162396 Tehran IRNA in English 0709 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Aug 11, IRNA — Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakkan's government under the Refah Party is seeking to develop a new trend in its foreign relations, the English-language 'KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL' noted Sunday [11 August], stressing that the Turkish premier's visit to Tehran will boost stability and peace in the region and help pave the way for greater regional cooperation.

The editorial said Erbakan's trip to the Islamic Republic comes amid new initiatives on Ankara's part and sets a new mark in the course of relations between Turkey and its Muslim neighbors.

Lauding the Turkish premier's decision to turn a deaf ear to Washington's pleas to can the visit, it quoted Erbakan as saying, "Turkey is Iran's neighbor and wants to develop its relations with that country in the framework of mutal interests."

Welcoming expanded Tehran-Ankara relations, the article concluded, "obviously, Erbakan's visit will consolidate the historical bonds between Iran and Turkey and open a new era in bilateral relations."

Iran: Habibi, Turkish Premier Discuss Oil, Border Security

LD1108203496 Tehran IRIB Television Second Program Network in Persian 1800 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] During the first round of talks between Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan and our country's First Vice President Hasan Habibi both sides stressed the need for the expansion of the two countries' cooperation in the economic, political, and cultural areas. [passage omitted]

Mr. Erbakan expressed regret at the decrease in the level of trade exchanges between the two countries in the past few years and called for the expansion of bilateral cooperation. He said: The most significant factor which bonds the two nations together is Islam. [passage omitted]

The Turkish prime minister said: Ankara believes in Tehran's goodwill and determination to safeguard and strengthen peace and stability along the two countries' joint borders. He said: Turkey calls for Iran's and Turkey's joint economic cooperation in Central Asia and Caucasia without pursuing competing objectives.

Mr. Erbakan referred to the signing of an agreement on the purchase of gas from Iran and said that his country was ready to purchase electricity as well as crude oil, up to 5 million barrels per day, from our country.

During the same talks, Habibi described the visit of the Turkish prime minister to Iran as significant for the expansion of political, cultural, economic, and parliamentarian relations and increasing regional and international cooperation. He said: The two countries should make efforts to expand their relations further and bring the trade volume between the two countries to an acceptable level.

Mr. Habibi said: The powerful presence of the two countries in Central Asia and Caucasia, as two partners, will help put an end to the interference of alien powers in those regions and will help the growth of their economies. He added: instability and differences in those regions will not serve the interests of any country and peace and stability should be strengthened there.

The first vice president said: We believe that the two countries' borders should be borders of peace, friendship and fraternity. He said: We openly announce that the Islamic Republic of Iran will not allow any group to disturb Turkey's border security from inside Iranian territory and we expect Turkey to do the same.

Iran: Erbakan Foresees 'Bright Future' for Iran-Turkey Relations

LD1208214896 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 12 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, before leaving Tehran today, gave an exclusive interview to a correspondent of the Central News Unit. During this interview Mr. Erbakan expressed his views on bilateral relations and issues of the Islamic world.

About the future of Iran-Turkey relations, he said: I see a very bright future because the two nations' shared religious and cultural beliefs and their sincere and historical ties are major factors that have strengthened the two countries' links.

About his meetings with the authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the effect of these meetings on the two countries' ties, Mr. Erbakan said: During my meetings and talks with the officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran, I realized that we enjoy mutual trust and this paves the way, better than ever before, for the strengthening of our friendship and sincerity. And I must say that this was the objective of my visit to Iran; and praise be to God, we have succeeded.

In reply to a question on the method of realizing such objectives as establishment of an Islamic common

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market, an ECO [Economic Cooperation Organization] bank or an Islamic united nations, he said: Good preliminary steps have been taken in order to realize this beautiful and significant objective. And at present 10 fraternal and Muslim countries are cooperating within the framework of the Economic Cooperation Organization, ECO. I strongly believe in sincere and fraternal union and cooperation among the Islamic countries, and in view of the existing circumstances in the world, I consider this to be a necessity.

Mr. Erbakan said: There are many Muslim nations and Islamic countries in the eastern world, in ASEAN, in the South and in Africa. We can strengthen their relations and have suitable and rational relations with the West and the rest of the world.

The Turkish prime minister said that the Economic Cooperation Oraganization, ECO, was an important organization which could act as a bridge between Asia, Africa and Europe, and revive the brilliance of the past through rebuilding the Silk Road.

Mr. Erbakan also spoke on the effects of cultural cooperation between nations. He said: Nations should learn about each other on a cultural level and this is the important responsibility of the mass media, particularly those of Iran and Turkey. I believe that, unfortunately, nations have not learned about each other properly and this is because the mass media have failed. We have to learn about the realities of other countries and present them to society in order to bring people closer.

Mr. Erbakan said: In Turkey we have five chairs in the Persian Language and they are now teaching Persian. This is an important cultural issue. When I met President Hashemi-Rafsanjani, his excellency approved the idea of establishing chairs for the teaching of Turkish language and literature at Tehran University. This was an important and valuable step.

Answering a question about the method of transforming the current economic situation in Islamic countries so as to promote relations between them, Mr. Erbakan said: Vigilance and encouragement are necessary. We have to create the awareness so that Islamic governments and nations understand that they can meet their requirements, as well as fundamental goals, through cooperation and exchanges.

The prime minister of Turkey said that Westerners have achieved technological advances but not in other fields. In fact, many Islamic countries have advanced significantly in many fields. They are not lagging behind and could be even more advanced. They could even compete with the West.

He emphasized that the Islamic world should believe in itself and should be supported and encouraged. [passage omitted]

Iran: Road Minister on Iranian-Turkish Trade

LD1108194896 Tehran IRNA in English 1754 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Aug. 11, IRNA — Akbar Torkan, road and transportation minister and head of the Irano-Turkey joint commission predicted that trade exchange will expand to over USD 2.5 billion annually.

Torkan indicated that the grounds for cooperation between two countries could still further boost up the predicted figure.

The transportation minister pointed out that with the formation of four sub-committees on energy, transportation, trade and industry, important decisions had emerged.

Expounding on the decisions, head of the Irano-Turkey joint committee stated that according to the agreement inked in Tehran, Iran is to sell gas to Turkey and electric power or vice versa.

He said that 154 kilowatts high voltage line is to be constructed in the first phase, adding that in the second phase the power output will rise to 400 kilowatts and that two countries will connected to the power networks.

On transportation accord, the minister stated that two countries have agreed that only Iranian and Turkey's transportation system will on load and off load Iranian merchandise at the Tarabuzan port on competitive bases.

Torkan also stated that the two countries had agreed to put the Tarabuzan port at the disposal of the Islamic Republic of Iran so that it could facilitate the flow of export to the world and the Central Asian republics through Iranian businessmen.

The head of the commission also stated that the Turkish prime minister, Necmittin Erbakan had also agreed on the construction of a railroad networks to van seaport so that the Tajan-Sarakhs link could be expanded to serve Eskandaroon port and other Central Asian countries [sentence as received].

The two sides also agreed that flights between Istanbul and Tabriz be resumed in the foreseeable near future, ink and accord on minimum tariffs Monday [12 August] and each side set aside USD 100 million for the export purposes.

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Iran: Jordan's King Husayn 'Contributed Nothing' To History

LD1008133896 Tehran AKHBAR in Persian 5 Aug 96 p 2

[Viewpoint by Jalal Sadr: "The Capital of the Jordanian King"]

[FBIS Translated Text] King Husayn of Jordan is one of the Arab leaders who has found a place for himself in the course of the Middle East developments since the illegal emergence of Israel. King Husayn has survived for a period in history but, unlike Nasir and al-Asad, he has contributed nothing to history. Perhaps it is for the same reason that he is trying to follow the footsteps of these men.

King Husayn was the first Arab leader to wage war against the Palestinians, whereas he never really fought against Israel. He followed al-Sadat's footsteps too and went to Tel Aviv. And now he is trying to find a role for himself in the new scenario written by al-Asad, which has attracted much criticism.

King Husayn cannot play Mubarak's role, the same as being incapable of becoming as important as 'Arafat. When 'Arafat visited the White House, the world burst into tears with anger and amazement.

King Husayn has visited various countries to meet as many influential figures as possible. And even when he played host to Rabin in Jordan, the world news media were writing reports on his secret past contacts with Tel Aviv.

The extreme policies adopted by Netanyahu, al-Asad's determination, and Mubarak's restlessness have forced King Husayn to think of a solution. He is striving to hoist the Israeli flag all over the Middle East region. Realization of such a dream would reduce the level of criticism against the old king inside Jordan, and he may seek assistance from rich Zionists to overcome some of the economic difficulties in his country. But the capitalists invest in a country where they are assured of a return on their capital. What can King Husayn offer them?

Jordan is facing immense economic problems, and its political problems are even greater. Geopolitically it is less important than its neighboring countries, and this is more so today. King Husayn, therefore, cannot afford to shoulder the heavy burden of a major investment; and no doubt Netanyahu is aware of this point.

Iran: Commentary on Jordanian King's Visit to Saudi Arabia

LD1108142896 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1004 GMT 11 Aug 96

[Station commentary: "Jordanian King's Objective in Visiting Saudi Arabia"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Today Jordanian King Husayn will arrive in Saudi Arabia at the head of a political delegation for talks with Saudi King Fahd and that country's other authorities. During his visit, he will be pursuing two essential and related objectives. One, King Husayn is trying, by using the opportunities in the region, to improve his relations with Saudi Arabia and enjoy its economic and political advantages. To realize this objective, he made his first visit to Saudi Arabia at the end of last year [year beginning 21 March 1995], in a climate that resulted from Saddam's sons-in-law seeking refuge in Jordan and after U.S. mediation aimed at improving relations between Amman and Riyadh, but he failed to meet King Fahd.

The U.S. authorities, bearing in mind the special status of Saudi Arabia in the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council and the signing of a peace accord by Amman and Tel Aviv, expected an improvement in Jordanian-Saudi Arabian relations to assist with extending the peace process they were seeking in the region. However, consequent events in the region; including the deadlock in the compromise process after the Zionist regime's insistence on its expansionist policy, and, in particular, the appearance of serious differences between Saudi and U.S. officials after the explosion at the U.S. military headquarters in Dhahran; clearly demonstrated the futility of the earlier notions of the White House officials and has now given other aspects to the issue of strengthening relations between Amman and Riyadh.

The second objective King Husayn pursues in his visit to Saudi Arabia is to publicize Jordan's capability to restart the peace process in the region. In this respect, he has adopted a competitive policy regarding Egypt and side by side with Cairo's regional and international efforts has begun political moves aimed at introducing Amman's political role in regional developments. On that basis, before starting for Saudi Arabia, he conferred last week with the leaders of Syria, the [Palestinian] self-rule establishment, and the Zionist regime — who are among the principal parties involved in the peace process — and will be briefing Saudi officials on the results of these talks.

Political experts believe that although it is likely that the first part of the objectives of King Husayn's visit

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to Saudi Arabia, that is the strengthening of Amman-Riyadh relations, will meet with success because they coincide with the Cairo Arab Summit statement concerning the expansion of Arab unity, it is not expected that his political efforts to restart the peace process will be welcomed by Saudi or any other Arab state authorities. That is because these efforts demonstrate that Jordan goes its own way in regional developments and at the same time contradicts the decisions made by the Cairo Summit.

Iran: Syria's Reaction to 'Unworthy' Israeli Offers Praised

LD1008195496 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 10 Aug 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Syria has once more reacted negatively to and rejected illogical proposals by the Zionist regime following the Zionist prime minister's proposals to Syria to negotiate directly at the level of the top leaders of the two countries. Netanyahu has now proposed to renew the deadlocked negotiations between the two sides at the level of foreign ministers.

According to political believers, putting forth such proposals along with his first Lebanon plan are moves which are aimed at exerting more pressure on the Syrian Government. In the last few weeks, following the rightist Netanyahu's victory in the recent Zionist elections and the announcement of his extremist positions, which reject the peace for land principle, he has come under pressure from both inside and at the international level. Now it seems that the Zionist prime minister is trying to revive the capitulation negotiations on one hand and dictate his either-war-or-peace solution to Syria.

It is obvious that the first Lebanon scheme is a calculated trick to divide Syria and Lebanon in negotiations with the Zionist regime. Based on this plan, the withdrawal by the Zionist regime from south Lebanon will take place in a step-by-step plan over a period of several months and, regardless of the UN Security Council Resolution 425, of course, this withdrawal is supposed to take place after two years of negotiations between the Zionist regime and the Syrian officials. Since in plans proposed by the Zionist regime there has been no mention of the occupied Golan Heights, Damascus has rejected all such proposals and adopted a patient wait-and-see policy. Two months of rule by the new Zionist regime has revealed the fact to Syria that while Netanyahu has been proposing renewing the Zionist-Arab capitulation talks, he's also been following his expansionistic policies of continuing the construction of Zionist settlements in the Golan Heights and the West Bank and making aggressions upon south Lebanon.

Therefore, Syria's logical positions and its harsh reaction to the unworthy Zionist offers is once more a loud and clear message, which will bring Zionists officials to understand better the firm alliance between Damascus and its allies involved in discussions with the illegitimate Zionist regime.

Iran: Minister Condemns Assassination of Tajik UNESCO Director

LD1108191896 Tehran IRNA in English 1740 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Aug. 11, IRNA — The Iranian minister of cuture and Islamic guidance, Mostafa Mirsalim on Sunday [11 August] deplored the assassination on 29th July of Doctor Mohammad Assemi Khojandi, Tajik scholar and director of Central Asian project of UNESCO.

He said in his communique that the assassination had been designed by elements that hated Iranian and Tajik cultures of the two countries.

The Iranian minister said in his communique that the Persian language council deplored the killing of Assemi as well as condemned the idea behind that perpetration.

Tajik scholar Doctor Assemi was gunned down by yet unidentified gunmen on July 29.

Iran: CGFLI Promoting Mir-Hoseyn Musavi as Presidential Candidate

LD1008132396 Tehran SALAM in Persian 5 Aug 96 pp 1, 2

[News Item: "Presidential Election in the Words of the Secretary General of the Organization of the Mojahedin of Islamic Revolution"]

[FBIS Translated Text] There is one year to go before the presidential election but already political groups have begun extensive activities to enter the presidential race.

In this connection, the Coalition of Groups Following the Line of the Imam [CGFLI] have held talks with [former Prime Minister] Engineer Mir-Hoseyn Musavi in order to persuade him to stand as a candidate.

Mohammad Salamati, secretary general of the Organization of the Mojahedin of Islamic Revolution, spoke extensively with SALAM on the future presidential election and the talks with Engineer Musavi.

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On the CGFLI's motives for choosing Engineer Mir-Hosayn Musavi as a candidate, Salamati stressed: People should not be indifferent and should be encouraged to participate in the election. Various political and professional groups, which represent particular classes, must continue political activities. This is an obligation, and it was on this basis that CGFLI, including the Islamic associations of teachers, doctors, engineers, students, university lecturers and OMIR decided to participate actively on the political stage, particularly in the next presidential election.

Salamati added: The CGFLI Coordination Council decided to choose Mir-Hosayn Musavi as its candidate for the election. His excellency has a large social base and will attract the majority of votes. Of course, the aim of the exercise is not only to win. But the CGFLI cannot remain indifferent and will continue to be active in every domain. The important point is duty, not victory.

Salamati said that the two main aims of his organization and other CGFLI groups, during the recent Majles elections, were the revival and identifying the Line of the Imam and breaking the climate of monopoly.

He added: It was agreed that these two aims would be pursued during the presidential election in order to encourage those who have been indifferent, doubtful, or somewhat isolated and inactive.

He said the formation of the Hezbollah Assembly in the Majles indicated the defeat of the climate of monopoly.

He said: The presence of the Assembly, which includes the faction following the line of the Imam and the Servants of Construction, indicates that the Majles is not in the monopoly of a particular faction.

On the the dangers of monopolism, he said: The notion of monopolism can not survive in any country and we call on all groups to help in the creation of a healthy and befitting elections.

He advised all groups and factions not to worry about the possibility that they might receive a small number of votes in the election, and to participate actively in choosing and presenting a candidate, and thus help to creator a glorious election, as the one held for the fifth Majles elections.

On the political future of the president and certain views that Mr Hashemi-Rafsanjani should resign, he said: No-one can, nor has the right, to set the agenda for the honorable president. He is speaking with politeness when he says that he prefers a period of rest after his responsibilities. But I think individuals such as the president are a credit to the country and the revolution, and must be utilized as far as possible. Here tiredness can be no excuse, particularly since the pious are energized by their beliefs. Political duty and work is never ending, unless problems deny the opportunity.

He added: Mr. Hashemi is such an [important] figure that he must maintain his role. I think it would be only fair that he should pursue the formation of a new party or revive the Islamic Republic party. Furthermore, his presence in the Combatant Clergy Association is very effective, and his experience, personality and comprehensive vision will prevent monopolism. His presence in the Majles too could be very effective.

He also spoke about the possibility of the Traditional-Right Faction and the New Left Faction — which were thought to be coming close until the elections for the fifth Majles — choosing a joint candidate.

He said: The two factions came close during the Majles elections, but then the New Left realized that they had committed a mistake, including the fact that the deputies from the Traditional-Right were planning on passing laws in favor of the very capitalist system against which the Left was writing. They have gradually realized that they were deceived.

Finally, he stressed that the Organization of the Mojahedin of Islamic Revolution and other groups following the line of the Imam were founded on peaceful activity far from climates of tension and chaos and the belief that all social classes and groups should participate on the political stage, including the decisive presidential election next summer.

Salamati said: Groups following the line of the Imam will continue their discussions in order to reach a comprehensive analysis and to persuade Engineer Musavi to participate seriously in the election.

Iran: Zeynab Society To Support Nateq-Nuri for President

LD1108164796 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 6 Aug 96 p 2

[Unattributed article]: "In Presidential Election, the Zeynab Society Will Support Nateq-Nuri"

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Maryam Behruzi, secretary general of the Zeynab Society, has said: This society will support Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Nateq-Nuri in the next presidential election.

She was speaking to members of the Zeynab Society on the blissful birth anniversaries of their Excellencies Prophet Muhammad and Imam Ja'far Sadiq.

She said: A president should believe firmly in the Guardianship of the Jurisconsult and enjoy the trust of the Hezbollahi people.

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Behruzi said that Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Nateq-Nuri was the most suitable candidate for the future presidency, and referring to his qualities, she said: Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Nateq-Nuri has a brilliant record of political struggles and had an effective role in bringing down the despotic regime and establishing the Islamic Republic.

She added: His Excellency Nateq-Nuri speaks the truth and for it he endured prison and torture during the despotic regime. He was one of the close companions of the late imam and is trusted by the esteemed leader today.

The secretary general of the Zeynab Society said: One of the most important qualities of His Excellency Nateq-Nuri as the future president is that he is a cleric. The clergy are the distinct voice of Islam and are trained at the school of religion. [passage omitted]

Iran: Reported Radiation Leak at 'N-Bomb Plant'

LD1108104896 London THE SUNDAY TELEGRAPH in English 11 Aug 96 p 24

[Report: "Alert Over Leak Report at Iran N-bomb Plant" by Con Coughlin]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Western intelligence experts are this weekend trying to confirm claims that a top secret Iranian nuclear complex was involved in a radiation incident in which seven German experts were injured.

First reports of the incident in the Iranian press suggested the accident had occurred at one of the country's nuclear installations in the north of the country, close to the Caspian Sea.

According to the original report, 45 people, including the Germans, were injured at Iran's Neka nuclear complex when they were exposed to gamma rays. Western intelligence experts are convinced that Iran is committed to developing its own nuclear weapons capability, and believe the Neka complex is a vital component in the mullahs' attempts to develop a nuclear arsenal.

Neka was the subject of international controversy last year when The Sunday Telegraph revealed that the complex was to be supplied with two 440-megawatt Russian nuclear reactors following a secret deal between Tehran and Moscow.

The latest reports were later corrected by Iranian officials who said the radiation leak had occurred at a gas power station at the town of Rasht 150 miles away.

The power station is being built with the help of the German engineering company Siemens.

The company also issued a statement saying that said none of its workers had been injured by the radiation leak, which they claim was caused by faulty welding equipment.

But the statements issued by both the Iranians and Siemens raise more questions than they answer. The German technicians previously worked on the controversial Bushehr nuclear power station project in the Gulf.

The Germans stopped work there after heavy criticism from Britain and the United States. And Siemens has failed to adequately explain why its nuclear engineering experts were working on the construction of a civilian gas-fired power station.

The Iranian authorities, furthermore, have so far refused to acknowledge the existence of the Neka complex.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) which conducts regular inspections of Iran's nuclear establishments, has no knowledge of Neka, which is said by high-placed Iranian sources to be the largest of its type in Iran.

A spokesman for the IAEA in Vienna said last week that the agency was satisfied with Iran's explanation about the accident, even though officials were not prepared to give Iran a clean bill of nuclear health.

"We can only examine what the Iranians allow us to see." said an official.

Iran: Weapons Amnesty Extended by Two Months

LD1208120396 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 12 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] According to the Central News Unit, the head of the judiciary and the eminent leader have agreed to extend the weapons amnesty period for two more months. The program begins today. This follows the success of the weapons amnesty period granted by the eminent leader.

Iran: ECO Development Bank To Begin With $1 Billion in Capital

LD1208084496 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0730 GMT 12 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The ECO [Economic Cooperation Organization] Development Bank will be set up with starting capital of $1 billion in the near future. ECO branches will be opened in Tehran and Istanbul.

The report comes after yesterday's meeting in Tehran between the managing director of Bank Melli Iran and

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the Turkish minister of state in charge of Central Asia, Balkan and ECO member countries. During the meeting, the two sides expressed the hope that the establishment of the ECO Development Bank would have a productive effect on the expansion of financial relations between the [ECO] member countries.

Iran: Daily on Government Plans 'To Invest More' in Oil Sectors

LD1008130896 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 7 Aug 96 p 2

[Unattributed Editorial: "Forget U.S. and Plan the Economy"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Iranians are really delighted to see the European reaction against the law signed by U.S. President Bill Clinton on Monday [5 August] to punish foreign companies for investing in Iran's oil and gas industries.

The Clinton administration's move infuriated European countries and, for the first time since the end of the Cold War, Europe with one voice refused to accept the dictated policies of the United States.

Iranians expect the same from other friendly countries in the world particularly in the far East.

It is really a source of utmost pleasure to see that Europe is no longer prepared to go along with Washington's political machinations.

We suggest that Iran, Europe, and certain other countries set up an international conference to study terrorism in all its dimensions. The conference, if properly organized could identify and remove all existing and future obstacles that prevent bilateral or multinational cooperation of countries.

European countries should give serious consideration to the proposal for holding a conference on terrorism because now is the time to take practical measures to combat terrorism rather than confine our activities to filling the news media with rhetoric.

As far as Iran is concerned, it should not waste its politico-economic leverage in countering the U.S. bankrupt policy. The Islamic Republic must do all to keep its house in order by investing more in its oil and gas industries.

We should have a specific strategy for a more efficient way of using our oil and gas sectors. We should cut down our crude exports as much as possible and invest whatever we can in our oil industry's downstream sector to increase the export of our refined petroleum products in order to receive the greatest benefit from this God given gift.

Economy without oil is a hot topic here in Iran which some wrongly interpret as not extracting any crude. It is a wrong theory and an economically unhealthy notion, particularly at a time when we have foreign debts.

We should emphasize the strengthening of our economy as a best means to counter U.S. adventurism such as the extra-territorial sanctions imposed last year in June and enhanced on Monday, because these moves are bound to backfire on the U.S. Administration and provide another disillusionment for President Clinton.

We should note that the basic objective of the United States adventurism is to weaken our economy. But if properly planned, the same economy will bring the same America to its knees. So, forget the U.S. and plan the economy on sound ground.

Iran: Gas Injection Programs Increase Recoverable Oil Reserves

LD1008134496 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 7 Aug 96 pp 4, 13

[Article by Mahyar Emami: "Iran to Increase Crude Reserves"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Since the first oil discovery in Iran on May 26, 1908, the oil sector has become Iran's largest industry and the country's largest source of foreign exchange earnings. In 1912, the first oil pipeline was built, with a diameter of 10-15 cm, from Masjed-e Soleyman to Abadan. The first consignment of crude oil, amounting to 350,000 barrels, was exported from Abadan in 1912.

Also the construction of the huge Abadan refinery was started in 1912 and the refinery went on stream just before the outbreak of World War I. Before the outbreak of Iran-Iraq war, the Abadan refinery was producing 650,000 barrels per day (bpd) of petroleum products. The refinery resumed production in May 1989, after a lapse of more than eight years. The Abadan oil refinery's capacity in 1994 according to figure published by Iranian Ministry of Energy, was 350,000 bpd.

For nearly 20 years after Masjed-e Soleyman's oil was discovered in 1908, Iran remained the only commercial oil producer in the region. Then exploration drilling throughout the Middle East resulted in the discovery of oil in Iraq (1928), Saudi Arabia (1938), Kuwait (1946) and United Arab Emirates (1962).

Currently the largest volume of oil reserves in the world are located in these five countries. At present the Persian Gulf region's oil reserves are estimated at 648 billion barrels comprising almost 65 per cent of the world's total reserves.

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In recent years, as a result of modern exploratory activities, reserves of Iran, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait and U.A.E. have grown dramatically from a total of 356.9 billion barrels in 1982 to 640.3 billion barrels in 1988. However, during the same period (1982-1988) the price of oil (Dubai's light crude) fell from 36 to 13 dollars a barrel.

Although by presenting the above figures, it is not meant to suggest that significant reserve increases by these five countries was the primary factor affecting the price of oil, but, undoubtedly, the massive reserve additions by these countries has been one of the reasons for the crash of the oil price.

Exploratory activity during the past 91 years (1903-1994) has resulted in the discovery of some 133 billion barrels of recoverable oil in Iran, which includes primary and secondary reserves, gas liquid and heavy oil. Of this amount, some 44.5 billion barrels of oil have been produced by the end of 1994. Thus, the remaining recoverable oil reserves at year end 1994 was estimated at 88.8 billion barrels. Of this number, primary reserves amount to about 70.7 billion barrels. Therefore, it is believed that if gas injection programs are implemented, another 18.1 billion barrels can be recovered.

It is worthy to note that for recovery of this additional secondary reserves, a cumulative volume of about 100 trillion cubic feet of gas (2780 billion cubic meters) must be injected into the oil fields. However, by the end of 1994, only 6 percent of this volume has been injected.

The first gas injection program was begun in 1976 into Haft Kel oil field. The injection of some 400 million cubic feet per day of gas into Haft Kel, increased the pressure of this oil field by 300 pounds per square inch (psi) from 1100 psi to its initial value of 1400 psi.

As a result, the volume of oil produced from Haft Kel was boosted from 14,000 bpd to 35,000 bpd. Also, injection of gas into Gachsaran was started in 1978. When Gachsaran was first brought into production in 1940, it had an initial pressure of 3.600 psi and an initial oil column of 2,200 meters (7,000 ft.). Before the start of gas injection program into this field, some 39 percent of its recoverable primary reserves had been depleted. In 1978, the pressure of Gachsaran was 2184f psi. According to the Journal of the Iranian Petroleum Institute (spring 1996), in order to sustain the pressure of the oil column in Gachsaran, some 17.5 trillion cubic feet of gas will have to be injected into this field. By the end of 1993, some 4.27 trillion cubic feet of gas had been injected into Gachsaran. The completion of the gas injection project is expected to increase the volume of oil exploited from Gachsaran by an additional 4 billion barrels.

In the 1960's, Gachsaran was the major producer of Iranian heavy oil. This large oil field has since 1978 produced 2.8 billion barrels of oil. Since 1978 Pazanan gas has been injected into Gachsaran oil field. At the end of 1993, the pressure of Gachsaran oil field was 1925 psi. It is to be noted that if gas injection or repressuring efforts had not been made, the pressure of the field would now have plunged to 1000 psi, or about 980 psi less that its current value. Thus, the field would not be capable of producing at its current rate of 600,000 bpd. Due to the success of gas injection programs in improving ultimate oil recovery and extending the lifespan of the reservoirs, in recent years gas injection has been conducted in about half a dozen of very large Iranian oil fields. They are: Marun, Karanj, Parsi, Lab-e-Sefid and Bibi Hakimeh.

Iran: Report on Increasing Self-Sufficiency in Oil Excavation

LD1108204296 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] With self-sufficiency in the excavation of oil and gas wells, there has been a foreign exchange saving of 1.5 billion dollars in the country. Let me draw your attention to a report about this:

[Reporter] Since the start of the first five year development plan until now, the Islamic Republic of Iran has drilled 467 oil wells and repaired 200, relying on the capabilities of domestic specialists.

According to officials in charge of the Islamic Republic of Iran's National Excavation Company, since the beginning of 1372 [year beginning 21 March 1993] until the end of 1374 [year ending 19 March 1996], there have been 402 instances of chart-making operations in the country, a figure which, in view of self-sufficiency in chart-making operations, should reach 620 instances by the end of this year. Chart-making is the preparation of information from the vicinity of the oil field, something that plays an essential role in the productivity of the well and the location of the excavation.

In line with national activities and having purchased 17 units of dry excavation equipment with a value of 630 million dollars, this company — relying on the country's technical and engineering capabilities — has reached a self-sufficiency level of more than 96 per cent regarding the repair, maintenance and manufacture of equipment and machinery used in oil and gas wells on dry land.

Since the attainment of self-sufficiency in chart-making operations until now, a foreign exchange saving of 25

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million dollars has been made and provisional figures suggest that this will reach 30 million dollars by the end of this year. Also, through cementing operations at oil wells since last year, 110,000 barrels of oil are being added to the country's daily oil production capacity.

Toward the implementation of the project to supply and provide support for the spare parts needed by domestic industries and in order to counteract the negative effects of the economic embargo by the United States, the Islamic Republic of Iran's National Excavation Company has signed six contracts with domestic industries, with a value of 80 billion rials. At the moment and toward the export of technical and engineering services, the Islamic Republic of Iran has signed an agreement with Senegal regarding exploration and excavation. It has also signed an agreement with Azerbaijan. It has also played an active role in oil tenders regarding Libya, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, and Yemen. The Islamic Republic of Iran is now capable of exporting technical and engineering services relating to the excavation of oil and gas wells.

Iran: Paper Criticizes Government Export Policies

LD1108103296 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 5 Aug 96 p

[Article by Abbas Darvish-e Tavangar: "Save the Non-Oil Exports"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The value of non-oil exports fell from $4.4 dollars in 1373 [year beginning 21 March 1994] to $3.2 billion last year (1374), showing a fall of 28 percent. Meanwhile, the value of carpets as the most important source of non-oil export revenue fell by 45 percent, agricultural products by 22 percent and industrial goods by 9 percent. This is when, if the strategy of expanding exports had been implemented according to the second development plan legislation, the value of non-oil exports should have risen beyond $6 billion and, in the current year, should have come close to 10 billion.

The reason behind the reduction in non-oil exports is the adoption of hard currency and export policies at the beginning of last year which were intended to fix foreign currency rates and control inflation. Although significantly successful in stabilizing currency rates, [these policies] created 50 percent inflation and dampened exports. There was the possibility, by dint of removing some problems, of safeguarding the positive achievements of those policies as well as controlling inflation and boosting exports. However, unfortunately, none of these [measures] were adopted by the ministry of commerce which is the principal guardian of and policymaker for non-oil exports. That is to say, by taking away the powers of the ministry of commerce and giving them to a headquarters for regulating the foreign currency and goods markets, policies were adopted whose consequences have only now become clear. Although the ministry of commerce did not play a significant role in taking those decisions which caused non-oil exports to fall, it could have given the necessary warnings to the relevant organs right from the inception of those decisions. Nevertheless, it failed to do even that, at least at the level of public opinion. The main defenders of the policies which led to a reduction of non-oil policies, who apparently still insist on the implementation of those policies, were, and still are, Mr. Nurbakhsh, the head of the Central Bank, Economic and Finance Minister Mr. Mohammadkhan, and the head of the Planing and Budget Organization, Mr. Mirzadeh. On the day those decisions were taken they were of the unanimous opinion that exports would not fall but would rise! If, in the final year of the present government, non-oil exports do not flourish and current problems are not removed, this will definitely be registered as a weak point in its record.

Some of the policies adopted last year resulted in a reduction in export revenue since, in contradiction of the second development plan legislation, they eliminated the policy of imports for exports and essentially severed the connection between imports and exports in agreements. That is because in the past, losses incurred through export of goods were compensated for by permitted imports. What economic motive is there now for exporters to embark on loss-making exports? For fear of indiscriminate importing, which entails hard currency commitments, exporters were not even allowed to import needed goods. The time allotted to the return of hard currency, in particular in relation to [the export of] carpets, was so short that in practice it meant do not export. Pricing of goods by the pricing department at the export promotion centre was so high that in the world markets there were no buyers willing to pay such prices; or if there were, the exporters made meager profits. The reestablishment of the hard currency agreement and adoption of punitive instead of incentive policies added to the apprehension of exporters, so much so that despite the claims of more currency returns, these policies did not even succeed in bringing in as much hard currency as in 1373.

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Iran: KHORASAN Agricultural Expert on Wheat Consumption, Imports

NC1208072496 Mashhad KHORASAN in Persian 30 Jul 96 p 11

[FBIS Translated Text] Rural and urban families in the lowest income echelons get 81 percent and 82 percent respectively of their daily calorie needs from bread.

A senior expert in the technical and engineering department of the Khorasan Agricultural Research Center who was speaking to a KHORASAN correspondent yesterday added: Out of the 85 million tonnes of protein used throughout the world, about 4 million tonnes come from grain, especially wheat.

Stating that as much wheat is wasted in this country as we import, she said: Some 38 percent of the bread produced in Iran is wasted. She explained that 75 percent of the 565-million tonnes of wheat produced in 1994 was directly used to make bread.

According to Engineer 'Eyn Afshar, one-third of the total wheat grown countrywide in 1371 [year beginning 21 March 1992], worth 512 billion rials, was wasted in the various stages of production.

Pointing out that $400 million per annum is used to purchase wheat from abroad, she stressed: Some 50 percent of the total cultivated land in this country — about 602 million hectares — is used for wheat.

The senior expert added: The increase in the country's wheat production during the years 1361 to 1371 [1982-1992] was 350,000 tonnes. During the same 10-year period about 34 million tonnes of wheat, worth 420 billion rials, was imported.

'Eyn Afshar then went on to discuss five research projects on bread being conducted by the Technical and Engineering Department of the Khorasan Agricultural Research Center. She said: A national research project is being conducted in Mashhad on the reasons for bread wastage in order to find practical ways to cut wastage; there is a project in Khorasan on examining the food value and the chemical compositions of wheat germ and a project to stabilize the characteristics of wheat germ and examine the effects of adding germinated wheat to bread as well as a project to examine the value of bread baking and the special qualities of the wheat grown in Khorasan province; and there is a project to study the effects of sodium stearate, lactate, and lecithin on soya-enriched bread and germinated wheat added to bread. These are among the programs that have been implemented in this province since last year.

Iran: 'Identity' Program Reacts to Criticism

LD0908230196 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1535 GMT 9 Aug 96

[FBIS Summary] The 40-minute "Identity" program, produced by the "political group of the Voice and Vision," comments on criticisms directed at the program by Iranians inside and outside the country and some foreign radio stations. Unidentified male and female announcers present the program but are not seen on screen. No credits are shown either at the start or end of the program. The program is interrupted for 17 minutes by evening prayers.

The program begins with brief videos of unidentified Iranians speaking at meetings and conferences. The captions on these videos read: "Meeting of counter-revolutionary expatriates"; "Video films of Iranian authors such as Sa'idi-Sirjani, speaking about cultural onslaught." This is followed by commentary over video of satellites, radio stations, and airports. The announcer says that the producers of the "Identity" program are not surprised at the kind of criticisms the program attracts from elements "affiliated" to the West, which shows that the program's contents are effective and true. The commentary goes on to explain the origins of cultural onslaught, saying that the "Identity" program has so far tried to use "irrefutable evidence" to show "the realities that within the framework of cultural onslaught are being inflicted on the ideological norms and values of Iran's Muslim nation, under the guise of such things as cultural exchanges and the need to become familiar with other cultures."

Three specific groups or bodies of opinion are identified as having shown strong reaction to the program: The first includes the "masses, the responsible university and cultural strata, and committed intellectuals," who have been supporting and encouraging the program because they understood its goals.

The second is made up of those whose ideas and activities have been criticized and examined by the program, on the basis of "facts and documents." Included in this group are those who, for one reason or another, sympathize with or support "the affiliated pseudo-intellectuals."

The third group is identified as being similar to the second in that it consists of people who have been very upset by the broadcast of "Identity" and "its documentary contents," and consider that this program is an obstacle to the fulfillment of their objectives. The announcer continues: "The government radio BBC, the radio of the Zionist regime, counterrevolutionary circles, and papers published abroad are included in this group."

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Recordings from BBC and Qol Yisra'el are then heard criticizing the "Identity" program, and the Persian weekly NIMRUZ is quoted as saying that the program's makers have gone out of their way to take video films of Iranian academics arriving or leaving airports and attending conferences.

The program is interwoven throughout with brief parts of interviews with writers such as Sahabollah Zabih; titles of the journals GARDUN, IRAN-E FARDA, and ADINEH; photographs of poets Ahmad Shamlu and Nader Naderpur and journalist Jamshid Behnud; pictures of Ehsan Yar-Shater over the cover of the ENCYCLOPEDIA IRANICA; and cartoons by Ardeshir Mohasses.

Iran: Newspaper Director Found Guilty of False Reporting

LD1008103396 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 6 Aug 96 pp1,2

[Unattributed article: "Akhbar's Managing Director Found Guilty"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Iran News National Desk, Tehran — Ahmad Safa'i, the managing director of the Persian daily Akhbar, was in court yesterday answering numerous allegations, including publishing false reports.

He was charged by the Ministry of Roads and Transportation, the Physical Education Organisation, Nirou sports weekly and the adviser of the governor-general of Yazd with publishing false reports, insulting remarks and libel leading to the loss of public trust.

In addition, the legal deputy of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance has accused him of distorting the words of the Supreme Leader of the Revolution, and of publishing a report which propagated moral corruption and prostitution in the community.

And finally, the Tehran's Prosecutor General has complained that he had enlarged on the shortage of paper, construing it as a public crime.

After the charges were read in court, Safa'i said the complaint of the Ministry of Roads and Transportation was the result of insufficient information.

With regard to the Physical Education Organization, he said he had documents at hand to invalidate their claim and was ready to present them to the court if required.

He rejected the complaint lodged by Nirou weekly as unfounded. Regarding the complaint of the governor-general of Yazd about the publication of a special supplement on Yazd Province which criticized the governor and caused a lack of public trust, Safa'i said: "The supplement was attached to the newspaper without quoting a price and the subjects raised there did in no way lower public trust."

Turning to the complaint made by the Ministry of Islamic Guidance concerning distortion of the Supreme Leader of the Revolution, Safa'i said Akhbar had quoted from a report despatched by IRNA without making any deletion or addition, quoting IRNA's report word for word.

In answer to the accusation of spreading corruption and prostitution in the community, Safa'i said Akhbar had published various reports about the condition of life in Tehran, including the question of corruption and prostitution, and that this was the least a newspaper could do in informing the authorities of discrepancies in the community so that they could attend to them.

"The address indicated in that special report was anonymous and the names were false. We could never profit from such a report and our only aim was to inform the authorities about the problems that were besetting the community so that they could take proper action," Safa'i said, adding that only 30 percent of the facts were reflected in that report and the rest was omitted.

The court will first hear the judgement of the Press Jury, and will issue a verdict shortly.

Ahamd Pour-Nejati, a member of the Press Jury and deputy president of IRIB, told IRAN NEWS after the Press Jury's consultation session that "in some cases, the Akhbar daily's editor-in-chief was acquitted, while in others he was found guilty".

He added that in certain cases he failed to convince the court with his defense, such as apologizing for some things and claiming that he lacked journalistic experience.

Some accusations were beyond the framework of journalism. But the allegations of encouraging corruption and prostitution in society were considered a press offense, Pour-Nejati added.

The claim raised about the shortage of paper was dismissed by the court as baseless and untrue.

"It is within the jurisdiction of a court to decide on the severity of the offense. We considered him guilty but eligible for reduction of penalties," he said.

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Pakistan

Pakistan: Lt-General Says China, CTBT Not To Be Mixed With Kashmir

BK1208102696 Islamabad THE NATION in English 9 Aug 96 p 6

[Article by Lt-Gen Syed Refaqat: "At the Curious Conjunction of Kashmir, China, CTBT"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The current phase of Pakistan-U.S. relations starts with the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan (began in 1988, completed in 1989) and the sudden, unanticipated demise of the Soviet system and break-up of the Union. Whereas in the earlier period "broader American perceptions and responses had been conditioned by Cold War strategic priorities, with the sudden end to the Cold War and the subsequent fragmentation of the former Soviet Union, those perceptions lost whatever validity they might once have held. For the first time since partition (of the Sub-Continent), American decision makers needed to conceptualize the national interests, opportunities and risks at stake in the Sub-Continent without reference to the distorting paradigm of the Cold War. Whether U.S. leaders can fashion policies towards India (and) Pakistan ... that ultimately prove wise, more judicious and less divisive than those of the past will continue as one of the great challenges of the post-Cold War era". This is the clearest explanation of the conduct of American foreign policy in the South Asian Region in the post-Cold War era.

Back here in Pakistan we should also formulate our policies and establish a threshold of expectations based on the fact that the Cold War is over, the pacts and alliances in which "the most allied ally" of America was tied in are dead, the "evil empire" has vanished, democracy has successfully won the last battle making Fukuyama triumphantly able to pronounce "the end of history": Free market economy and political pluralism shall henceforth determine the rules of the game. Have we ever thought how trade has emerged as the determinant of strategic relations reversing the classical paradigm of geostrategy in Asia? For three hundred years and until the Soviet withdrawal in 1989 the complex dynamics of the whole of the Great Game hinged upon one point agenda: don't ever let Russia gain access to the warm waters of the Arabian sea. What is happening today? Both Iran and Pakistan are bending over backwards to lure with every conceivable concession and temptation, everyone and anyone in the Asian hinterland, to have preferential priority access to their ports and allied coastal facilities. The market has changed the world. Has it really? Has the market replaced ideology? Is the Cold War really dead?

It is true that the market factor has acted as a remarkably potent tool to moderate attitudes and to design the construct of Sino-U.S. relations. Even though political rhetoric and ideological passions do spring up with predictable punctuality of a religious ceremony, but after having made a point for political consumption and after having ceremonially paid a tribute to ideological gods, the inescapable imperative of the market reassert as overriding. Thus, after some well rehearsed posturing and studied procrastination, there is the business as usual for the rest of the year. But that is not the whole of the story.

At this point in time, China is emerging as the greatest consumer market in the world. With the rate of economic growth constantly in the double digit for the last fifteen years (even allowing for the fact that a retarded economy, such as China's before remodeling, can snow much higher rate of growth in its early years) shall have two very significant implications. One, that by the year 2005 when Hong Kong's economy shall have been well-integrated in the total system, China will have an affluent middle class of four hundred million people, with an aggregate purchasing power surpassing that of the whole of Europe today. Two, by the year 2020 (not including Taiwan) China, may emerge as the largest economy in the world, with consequential direct impact on its military capability, power projection potential and the political role it would like to play, much beyond its immediate neighborhood.

"How can this 'mammoth monstrosity' be contained" is the question which continues to occupy the policy makers and crystal ball gazers of the West. The recent announcement of the Shanghai Declaration by the Russian Republic, three Central Asian Republics and China, shows that the former two have opted out of the New Great Game of containing China within its natural and if possible reduced boundaries. The role of Japan remains unpredictable. The only other country which has a proven track record of antagonistic relations and intentions, or merely the question of influence in and leadership of the Third World, is India. India has clear hegemonic ambitions, national consensus and strong political will to pursue those ambitions, a powerful bureaucracy to sustain those policies at a level beyond the vicissitude and vagrancy of political change, quite a respectable technological base, a sturdy democratic constitutional framework and above all massive population (a great agent of production and consumption). In short, all the wherewithal to be a lead player in the New Great Game of containing China.

To be a creditable counterpoise to China, four things should be done for India. First, it should be disencumbered of the odorous burden of the legacies of the past

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five years connected with India's dealing of the situation in Kashmir; second, it must be admitted to the Security Council as a veto-holding permanent member; thirdly, to enable its admission as "permanent member of the Security Council, it should be persuaded to sign the CTBT [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty], which has the obvious salutary by-product of enabling Pakistan to sign the CTBT (a process in which India gets everything and Pakistan gets nothing); and fourthly, India's economy should be vigorously assisted to grow to a level to match that of China. If the "historical irritants" which place India and Pakistan at the opposite poles at any international debate are removed, and if Pakistan agrees to accept Indian "leadership" (a euphemism for hegemony), then the task of Western investors as well as strategists will be highly facilitated by dealing with the whole of South Asia as a single socioeconomic entity wrapped around the centrality of India, as a counter-poise to China. Kashmir continues to be a milestone wrecking many of the Indian ambitions. The "prestigious" ECONOMIST of London had let the cat out of the bag by declaring over a year ago that any kind of election will be a great step forward. The fraud inflicted upon the people of Kashmir during the Lok Sabha elections, on which much has been written in Pakistan and outside, had no inhibiting or cautionary effect upon some of our Western friends as far as their enthusiasm for elections per se goes. Thus, there is the most dangerous lurking fear that the Western thinkers and policy makers, will be quite satisfied with repetition of the same farcical charade in the IHK [India-Held Kashmir] state elections coming fall. The international community has to be reminded that the Kashmiri resistance sprang up in full glory and fury, not that there had been a dearth of farcical elections. In fact, there had been more than half a dozen elections of dubious credentials in IHK, since 1954. The current unrest, to emphasize in most categorical terms, is not to have a repeat of the "customary elections" nor "autonomy" within the Indian Constitution. To put it in straight and simple terms, the current movement of epic character is for a bigger objective and a "nobler" ambition: to secure the holding of a plebiscite to establish the will of the people to settle their own destiny. The "threatened" elections and promised autonomy are a great smokescreen to hide the sins of Indian oppression from the saner and more sensible part of the world opinion. These are two elements of the same conspiracy.

Concurrently, Mr. Gujral is being repackaged and sold as ardently "pro-Pakistan" and Gowda as a politician distant and disinterested in Kashmir, not encumbered by the legacy of Nehrus and North Indians, a fortuitous combination coming to the troubled South Asia as the greatest blessing since independence. And a promised autonomy as the panacea to solve the most nettlesome problem. These assumptions are dreadfully flawed and a deadly trap for the innocent, naive and credulous. Indian politicians are remarkably soft and accommodating when not in office. Once in office, the history takes over. To facilitate this assertion of history, India has a formidable bureaucracy which has a deeply entrenched position in the Indian decision making process and arrogant inflexibility to do things which it considers as crucial to the national interests of India. The politicians come and go but on matters of international relations, it is the voice of permanent civil servants in the Ministry of External Affairs which matters and finally prevails. Along with that, it must be recalled that the prescription of "special status" and autonomy has been tried more than once by persons no less honorable than Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru on a person no less venerable than Sheikh Abdullah and later by Indira Gandhi the illustrious daughter of Nehru on less than illustrious son of Sheikh Abdullah, Farooq Abdullah. The present uprising, of epic proportion in Kashmir is not for elections or autonomy, it is to assert the right of self-determination through a plebiscite to enable the people of Jammu and Kashmir to decide their own destiny. No one should mix the China factor, CTBT or other interests with that.

Pakistan: Noorani—Israel, CIA Planning Sectarian Riots

BK1208153096 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 12 Aug 96 p 12

[Report by Rana Mubashir]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — Sitting elbow-to-elbow with Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) chief Qazi Hussain Ahmad and Senator Maulana Samiul Haq, Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Pakistan (Noorani-Group) leader Shah Ahmad Noorani alleged here Sunday [11 August] that Mosad of Israel and the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had opened their offices in Pakistan to provoke sectarian riots.

"Pakistan must combat U.S. pressure and should go for a nuclear explosion. It should not sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) even if India inks it," Noorani stressed.

He was briefing newsmen after a meeting of Milli Yekjehti Council [MYC]. Vigorously censuring the United States (U.S.) for imposing economic sanctions on Iran, Iraq, Sudan and Libya, Noorani said that the rulers should protest at every level against the U.S. attitude as these Islamic countries had always stood by Pakistan. He said the Council expressed solidarity with these four Islamic states facing the U.S. threats.

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Noorani said that there was an instant need to wipe out misunderstandings with Afghanistan. A committee comprising Senator Qazi Hussain Ahmad, Maulana Fazulur Rehman and Senator Maulana Samiul Haq has been constituted to smooth relations with Afghanistan.

JI chief Qazi Hussain Ahmad said, "We have united to get rid of the anti-Islamic and corrupt rulers. We have asked the ulema [religious scholars] to pray after offering every namaz [prayer] for deliverance from these rulers."

The JI leader was of the view that the government should be shown the door and an impartial interim set-up be brought in for 90 days to cleanse the system. The MYC meeting decided to write letters to the Khateebs, Ulema and heads of religious Madaris urging them to tell the people the misdeeds of the government in a bid to make public opinion against the government. This will help prepare the people to participate in anti-government movement, the MYC meeting agreed.

Maulana Noorani accused the government of playing in the hands of the enemy by working on the agenda of the United States and its allies. He said corruption and nepotism were rampant in the country. He said the MYC on its part has tried its level best to down the scale of religious hatred thus creating an atmosphere of mutual understanding between the religious schools of thought, but he alleged that the government was fanning sectarianism to hide its failures.

Pakistan: 'Credible Nuclear Threshold States' Viewed as CTBT Hurdle

BK1208094096 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 10 Aug 96 p 7

[Editorial: "CTBT Hurdle"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] It will be unfortunate if India is allowed to get away with its efforts to block the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) at a time when all the five nuclear powers have reached consensus and the date of its finalisation — August 15 — draws near. Although the treaty is far from perfect and creates a sort of a caste system allowing perquisites to those who have the forbidden bomb, and disadvantaging those without it for the bulk of the countries it provides a guarantee.

Whether it would end the nuclear race among the haves at one level and among the threshold states on another is open to conjecture. Much of the prolonged negotiations that took place was concerned largely with finding ways and means of maintaining the nuclear race without physically seeming to do so, as was evident in the thousands of tests that were conducted.

India's objections generically relate more to its right for some more time to conduct tests to join the upper caste than to any principled stand. The climax of the CTBT debate unfortunately for Delhi came at a time when it was preparing to conduct a second nuclear test. This was expected to give it the final push towards being recognized as the sixth power. Consequently the modifications that India has suggested in the treaty draft are tacitly aimed at stretching the timeframe by which it would come into force, allowing Delhi sufficient interval for further maneuver.

The five powers which are now pursuing a concerted policy on the passage of the draft apparently favor its early enforcement, especially because there has been an identification of what are termed as credible nuclear threshold states — India, Israel and Pakistan. Evidently these form a somewhat lesser caste compared to the upper caste, but nevertheless capable of the mischief that has to be avoided. India's effort aims at avoiding this hurdle through bluff and bluster.

Pakistan, however, is clear in its position, that it would sign the CTBT come what may, only after India does. This seems a fairly rational stand at a time when the main promoters of the treaty are losing their patience with recalcitrant states.

The five powers, therefore would do better if they stopped pampering India and were more forceful in their attitude; placating a state seeking concessions through blackmail is not going to help the passage of the draft. India may have a nuisance value at the present juncture, but it must be realized that the bigger nuisance are the three threshold states together.

Pakistan: U.S. Curbs Threaten Relations With Iran, Libya

BK1208124196 Peshawar THE FRONTIER POST in English 11 Aug 96 pp 1, 2

[Report by Munir Ahmad]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Lahore — The U.S. President Bill Clinton's decision to impose sanctions on Iran and Libya has started affecting Pakistan as an Australian firm, BHP, will not make investment worth $11 billion "Pakistan-Iran Gas Pipeline Project," THE FRONTIER POST reliably learnt here Saturday [10 August].

Clinton last Monday [5 August] signed a bill which empowers Washington to take legal action against non-U.S. firms for making investment in the energy sector of Iran and Libya.

Pakistan wanted to import gas from Iran by laying down 1,500 Km long pipeline to meet its domestic and commercial needs, officials said.

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Pakistan is meeting 34 per cent of the commercial needs through natural gas. Renowned Australian firm BHP had shown willingness to make investment to the tune of $11 billion on Pakistan-Iran Gas Pipeline Project.

But, U.S. authorities' decision under which sanctions can be imposed on non-U.S. firms for making investment in the energy sector of Iran and Libya beyond $40 million dollars, kept the Australian firm away from this project.

Now the majority of foreign companies are avoiding Pakistan-Iran Gas Pipeline Project, sources said.

Pakistani authorities are still in a fix on the issue of sanctions imposed on Iran and Libya.

Diplomatic circles Saturday [10 August] said Washington wanted to isolate Tehran, for obvious reasons. "We should carefully handle this matter", Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, chairman of National Assembly's Kashmir Committee said.

U.S. authorities had also pressurized Turkey's prime minister to get his visit to Tehran canceled but Erbakan Saturday reached the Iranian capital ignoring U.S. warnings and pleas.

Experts say Pakistan should also adopt a bold stance because, as any wrong decision on the part of Islamabad can push Iran towards India.

We need the support of Iran to give a boost to trade with Tehran, therefore, we should evolve comprehensive strategy on this issue, experts said.

Turkey will sign $20 billion energy projects with Iran this week while Pakistan is importing oil and petroleum products to meet its energy demands.

It is learnt that officials of Pakistan and Iran are in touch with each other on the issues of mutual importance. Tehran has requested Islamabad not to succumb to U.S. pressure. Iran is ready to arrange finances for the Pakistan-Iran Gas Pipeline Project, the sources said.

Pakistan: FBI Presence in Islamabad Questions Pakistani 'Sovereignty'

BK1208074696 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 10 Aug 96 p 6

[Editorial: "FBI Coming Here To Combat What?"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Most Pakistanis must have felt embarrassed when they learnt through a foreign agency that Pakistan has permitted opening of a formal office of the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in the nation's capital Islamabad. On Wednesday [7 August] the US Information Agency circulated world-wide a "fact sheet" disclosing the news. The backgrounder provided glimpses of the comprehensive strategy to fight international terrorism, now a national security priority for the Clinton Administration.

President Clinton, who signed the law targeting Iran and Libya as sponsors of international terrorism only a day before the fact sheet announced to the world the opening of FBI offices in various regions of the world, wants to devote considerable resources to fighting international terrorism. By this he means working more closely than ever before with US allies to eliminate activities by states sponsoring terrorism, namely, Iran and Libya. Pakistan continues to have good brotherly relations with both countries, particularly Iran, our next door neighbour. A formal FBI office in Islamabad would be coordinating supervising and undertaking activities and operations some if not all of which would be directed against Iran. Such activities from Pakistani soil would be considered by our neighbour as hostile. That is not what would serve Pakistan's national interests in any way.

The full magnitude of activities and operations of the FBI Islamabad Office may never be known even by Pakistani authorities. However, the general thrust of anti-terrorist activities was highlighted by US Defence Secretary Perry the same day. He told members of Bar Association in Orlando that the US "cannot allow the threat of terrorism to drive it out of the Persian Gulf region."

That authoritative statement leaves no doubt that the FBI offices including the Islamabad office will closely focus on this area. According to Dr Perry, the FBI offices will serve another basic objective: to demonstrate "the ability of the United States to protect and defend its national interests around the world."

These are categorical, authoritative US statements and leave practically no room for pretending that the FBI Office in Islamabad is meant to help Pakistan fight terrorism unleashed by forces hostile to it. Most of the terrorist attacks inside Pakistan are planned and executed by Indian agency RAW [Research and Analysis Wing] which has a very active collaborative relationship with Israel. No one would believe that the FBI office in Islamabad would help Pakistan unearth the wide-spread tentacles of RAW and its ally, the MOSAD [Israeli intelligence service]. On the contrary, the FBI is more likely to interfere and distract investigations into the terrorist activities of Pakistan-hostile powers by pointing fingers at Iran and other anti-American powers.

President Clinton wants to work more closely with US allies to combat international terrorism. Pakistan no longer qualifies for the distinction. In 1990, the US government unilaterally decided that it will not

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treat Pakistan an ally and applied highly discriminatory laws to cripple its conventional defence capability and wreck its economic development. It is indeed odd that our government accepted a US request to establish a FBI office in Islamabad without ensuring that the US discrimination against Pakistan would end. This is, however, not to suggest that in return for lifting Pressler restrictions, the FBI office here would be acceptable. Such decisions must be based on some kind of mutuality of interest. Pakistan's national interest cannot be the same as the US national interest which in this region is to roll-back Iranian revolution and establish Israeli hegemony over the entire Middle East. The US seeks to divide the states in the region into opposing categories and camps while Pakistan's policy is to promote unity and strengthen good relations between all nations who are bound by history, culture and share a common destiny. The two policies cannot be complementary.

If the Pakistan government thinks that in its efforts to combat terrorism at home, it needs assistance from the FBI the best way would be to have some of its officers trained by FBI and other similar agencies in different countries. Outside assistance in on-the-spot investigations of terrorist activities targeting Pakistan may also be requested but this too must not remain limited to FBI. In order to combat terrorism, we can establish a task force exclusively focusing on fighting terrorism. This will also help us develop specialised skills and improve our existing expertise in tracking terrorist elements working for Pakistan-hostile powers. This can be achieved without permitting a permanent presence of a foreign intelligence agency on our soil.

The security of Pakistan is not under threat from the same sources as those that are trying to frustrate the US plans to impose its national will on all nations of the world. The US presence in the Gulf region is to protect its hold on the huge oil reserves there and supply routes to the advanced nations. That control gives the US a highly valuable strategic advantage over every one else. That scenario is likely to continue for considerable time in the future. An FBI office in Islamabad therefore, can hardly be relevant to our security, until, of course, the Americans know something that we don't.

There is no denying that Pakistan too faces a very real and serious threat from terrorism sponsored from across its borders but the Americans would never help us in combating that threat. Why then did our government agree to allow permanent FBI presence here? It is also a matter of Pakistan's sovereignty in as much as the possibility of FBI working strictly within the bounds of Pakistani law and rules is practically nil. The FBI will work to promote and protect US national interest. All things considered, the FBI's counterterrorist office here doesn't make sense. Or have we accepted once again to serve as a launching pad for hostile acts against our neighbours?

Pakistan: Afghan Delegation Meets Bhutto, Urges Reopening of Mission

BK1208061296 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 12 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto says Pakistan will work together with the United Nations and countries in the region to achieve a political solution to the crisis in Afghanistan. Speaking to a high-level Afghan delegation led by Interior Minister Mohammad Yonus Qanuni that called on her in Islamabad yesterday, the prime minister expressed the hope that peace would soon return to Afghanistan.

The Afghan interior minister said his delegation's visit is an attempt to turn a new page in the history of relations between the two countries. They asked Pakistan to reopen its mission in Kabul, for which the Afghan side will provide complete security and administrative facilities.

Pakistan: Leghari Offers 'Friendship' to Afghanistan

BK1208050196 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari has said Pakistan wants peace and political stability in Afghanistan on long-term sustainable basis and hoped leaders of all Afghan factions would start working for it at the earliest. He was talking to Mr. M. Yonus Qanuni, interior minister of Afghanistan, who called on him at the head of an Afghan delegation at the Aiwan-i-Sadr [presidency] in Islamabad today.

The president said we have nothing but affection, love, and respect for the people of Afghanistan, who have suffered more than any other nation as their physical infrastructure and human resources were very badly mauled and destroyed during the last 14 years. He said Pakistan does not want hegemony in Afghanistan, but would rather like to build bridges of cooperation and friendship based on commonality of mutual interest. The president said Pakistan would like to have friendship with Afghanistan at the highest level and he was looking forward to having Pakistani diplomatic presence at Kabul again to further facilitate contacts between the two countries.

The Afghan finance minister, in an interview with Pakistan television, has emphasized the need to strengthen political and diplomatic relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

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[Begin Afghan minister recording] Pakistan is our brother country, and it is very important for us to have brotherly relations with Pakistan since these are two Muslim countries who prefer to have best relations, and we are very much hopeful. [end recording]

Pakistan: Talks With Afghanistan Focus on Trade, Food Supplies

BK1208133896 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 11 Aug 96 pp 1, 10

[Report by Tariq Butt]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — A high level Afghan delegation arrived here Saturday [10 August] for wide-ranging talks with Pakistani officials on trade and supply of petroleum and food stuffs.

The delegation, headed by Interior Minister Yunus Qanuni included among others Finance Minister Abdol Hadi, Deputy Foreign Minister Abdur Rahim Ghafoorzai and Deputy Commerce Minister Abdol Rehman. Dr. Gharat Baheer, special envoy of Afghan prime minister Engineer Golboddin Hekmatyar, joined the team in Islamabad. The team was received by Interior Minister Nasirullah Babar and Foreign Secretary Najamuddin Shaikh at the Islamabad airport.

Two weeks ago, the Foreign Office had announced that Pakistan had invited the delegation on the request of the Afghan prime minister to discuss supply of food stuffs to meet shortages in Afghanistan. The Afghan Government would make payments in international currency to Pakistan.

The arrival of the team indicates the possibility of an improvement in Pakistan-Afghan relations which had seen the depth of deterioration with the burning of the Pakistan Chancery in Kabul by a government-sponsored unruly mob in September 1995, a day after the fall of Herat to the Taleban. The Rabbani regime charged that the student militia succeeded in capturing the important Afghan city with Pakistan's assistance.

During its visit, the delegation will hold meetings with President Farooq Leghari, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and Babar. Its members will go to Lahore to hold a meeting with Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali.

On Saturday, the delegation met Pakistani officials led by Finance Advisor V.A. Jafarey. Other officials concluded representatives of the Ministries of Commerce, Petroleum, Food and Agriculture, States and Frontier Regions, the Central Board of Revenue and the Chief Commissioner Afghan Refugees.

The talks focused on the supply of food stuff and petroleum from Pakistan. The Pakistan side expressed readiness in keeping with the Afghan request to facilitate the transportation through Pakistan of the items the Afghan Government decided to import from the outside world.

As a goodwill gesture, the government agreed for the provision of items required to meet immediate requirements of the population of Kabul.

On arrival here, Qanuni expressed the hope to discuss all issues which had led to the deterioration of relations between the two countrien]X2dH?e said the delegation intended to undertake discussions as to how bilateral ties could be improved. He said the team would take up all issues including political, trade and economic ones. The opening of transit trade from Pakistan to Afghanistan will be one of the subjects of the discussions.

Qanuni said the reopening of Pakistan Embassy in Kabul would figure in the talks. "There should be no concern in this regard as the ground for such action is fully prepared. We have come here with full authority and good intentions and hope that Pakistan will reciprocate similarly."

During the talks, the Pakistan side agreed to consider favorably the Afghan proposal for reopening of its embassy in Kabul. Pending the reconstruction of the mission and the arrangement for temporary accommodation, Pakistan would devise ways and means of maintaining contacts with authorities in Kabul.

On the political question, the Pakistani side emphasized its interest in maintaining contacts with all Afghan parties and its determination to facilitate the commencement of an intra-Afghan dialogue so that Afghans would agree among themselves on a peaceful and durable solution. The delegation briefed the Pakistani side on its proposals for the formation of a Supreme Council to which transfer of power could be affected and which could then be responsible for the holding of general elections or a Loya Jirga.

AFP adds: A topic on the agenda will be the restoration of overland trade routes to land-locked Afghanistan though Afghan officials said the supply of food and fuel to Afghanistan and plans for a massive regional oil and gas pipeline will come up during the Islamabad talks.

"The main thrust of the agenda during talks with the Pakistanis will be mutual cooperation and the improvement of relations between our two countries," presidential spokesman Abdul Aziz Murad said in the Afghan capital.

"We want the best possible relations with Pakistan and we hope this visit helps iron out the remaining differences that exist between our two governments," Murad said.

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In the past, Kabul has frequently blamed Pakistan for providing material support to its rival, the Taleban Islamic militia, which controls half of Afghanistan and has been besieging the Afghan capital in an attempt to topple Rabbani.

Islamabad has denied the charge, stressing its neutrality in Afghanistan's factional war that has plagued the country since the fall of the last communist government in Kabul in April 1992, which still shelters more than a million Afghan refugees, says it supports a peaceful settlement to the civil war negotiated by Afghan leaders themselves.

The new United Nations' special envoy to Afghanistan, Norbert Holl, a senior German diplomat, last month assumed the job of brokering peace among the warring Afghan factions, replacing former Tunisian Foreign Minister Mahmoud Mestiri.

Sources in Kabul said Rabbani's powerful military chief Ahmed Shah Mas'ud wanted to see a non-interference pact signed between the Islamabad and Kabul governments.

Despite the difficulties still remaining between the two governments, relations appear to have warmed considerably in recent months, particularly after former opposition leader Golboddin Hekmatyar was sworn in as Afghanistan's prime minister in June, observers in Kabul said.

Hekmatyar, who was for years supported by Islamabad, has said he wants to boost Afghanistan's ties with all its neighbors, including Pakistan.

Pakistan: Afghan Delegation Informed of Decision To Reopen Embassy

BK1208160396 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 12 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan has agreed to reopen its embassy in Kabul and will send its ambassador shortly. This was decided during talks between a high-powered Afghan delegation and Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali in Islamabad today. Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali told Pakistan Television Islamabad will shortly send a team to Kabul to assess the damages to Pakistan's mission in Kabul. He said Pakistan is ready to host a meeting of the regional Afghan leaders with a view to reach a solution of the problem.

A Kabul Radio report says the visit of Afghan Government delegation led by Interior Minister Yonus Qanuni to Pakistan will help improve relations between the two countries. The radio broadcast said with this visit the good intentions of both sides will dissipate the atmosphere of mistrust and pave the way for establishment of good relations. It said the visit will have far-reaching consequences and will open a new chapter in relations between the two neighboring countries.

Pakistan: Turkish Prime Minister Begins 3-Day Official Visit

BK1208164196 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 12 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan was accorded a very warm welcome on his arrival in Islamabad this evening on a three-day official visit to Pakistan. Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto received the distinguished guest.

While welcoming the Turkish prime minister, she told newsmen that the two brotherly countries are working together at the OIC [Organization of Islamic Conference] level. She added that Turkey is a gateway to Europe, while Pakistan is a gateway to Asia and the Pacific. Reciprocating the sentiments, Erbakan said his country and Pakistan are two very close friendly nations and his country enjoys very good ties with Pakistan.

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto is hosting a banquet in honor of her Turkish counterpart tonight. Both leaders will hold formal talks tomorrow which will cover bilateral ties and regional and international issues with reference to the present tragic situation in Kashmir.

Pakistan: Bhutto, Turkey's Erbakan Make Banquet Speeches

BK1308051496 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 13 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has said Pakistan and Turkey must work together for promotion of regional and international peace and security. Speaking at the banquet hosted in honor of visiting Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan in Islamabad last night, she said in recent years some concrete steps have been take to strengthen economic and commercial relations between the two brotherly countries. The prime minister said Turkish firms are engaged in large infrastructure projects in Pakistan and hoped that this cooperation would further increase.

Turning to Kashmir, Ms. Benazir Bhutto said Indian forces are engaged in repression of defenseless Kashmiri people in occupied Kashmir. They are committing murder and torture and women are being molested. Without resolution of the Kashmir issue, efforts for peace and stability in South Asia would remain unsuccessful. The international community must take cognizance of the massive violation of human rights in occupied Kashmir. She appreciated the support of the government and the

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people of Turkey for their brethren in occupied Kashmir and Turkey's active participation in the Organization of the Islamic Conference [OIC] contact group on Kashmir. The prime minister said Pakistan has been consistent supporter of the cause of Turkish Cypriot people and supports the UN good offices mission in promoting a mutually acceptable solution in Cyprus.

On Afghanistan, she hoped that through bilateral talks, Afghan leaders would agree to the establishment of a broad-based government based on the ground realities. The prime minister said the people of Bosnia faced unrestrained aggression with remarkable courage and did not stoop down before the aggressors. Now, there is a need for using all our means to bring to justice the perpetrators of crimes against humanity so as to meet the demands of justice. Ms. Benazir Bhutto reiterated Pakistan's principled position on Armenian aggression against Azerbaijan and called upon Armenia to withdraw its forces unconditionally from all the Azeri territories.

Speaking on the occasion, the Turkish prime minister, Necmettin Erbakan, said there are immense economic opportunities between the two countries and economic and trading communities of the two brotherly countries must avail them. He said there is a convergence of views on all matters between Turkey and Pakistan. Mr. Erbakan reiterated his country's support to Pakistan's search for a negotiated settlement of the Kashmir issue. He said Turkey always expressed great concern on the Kashmir issue because of the human tragedy the world has been witnessing in occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

The Turkish prime minister visited the Prime Minister's House in Islamabad yesterday to meet Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. The two leaders agreed that the potential for economic cooperation between Turkey and Pakistan has not been fully realized so far. The prime minister recalled the decision in the OIC summit at Casablanca for cooperation among the Islamic countries for the welfare of the region and proposed the creation of an Islamic common market and Islamic insurance organization. Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and Mr. Erbakan will be holding formal talks today which would be preceded by one-to-one meeting.

Pakistan: Mirani Wants Kashmir at Top of Indian Talks Agenda

BK1208045796 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Defense Minister Aftab Shaban Mirani has urged the opposition to hold negotiations with the government on matters of national importance. Talking to newsmen at Larkana, he said the prime minister has repeatedly invited the opposition for a dialogue on the matters of political and national importance, but it has paid no attention.

Answering a question, he said the government is fully aware of its responsibilities and paying full attention to the defense of the country.

On reducing tension with India, the defense minister said that Pakistan is ready for talks with India, but Kashmir issue should be on the top of the agenda of discussions.

Pakistan: Kashmiri Leader Seeks Opposition's Aid for Freedom Movement

BK1208080996 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 10 Aug 96 p 12

[Report Javed Jaidi]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MIRPUR: The AJK [Azad Jammu and Kashmir] Prime Minister, Barrister Sultan Mahmood, has urged the political parties of the state to set their internal differences aside and extend maximum support to the Kashmir freedom movement. He was addressing a mammoth public at Mirpur Stadium where thousands had braved scorching sun to accord him warm welcome on his first arrival in the native city after becoming prime minister.

The prime minister told the emotionally charged gathering that "now their brothers in occupied Kashmir will know in real sense that they are not alone in their fight against Indian aggression". He said India was trying to prolong its tyrant rule over Kashmiris through fake tactics like sham polls but India will have to leave Kashmir very soon as the freedom struggle has entered new phase after installation of PPP [Pakistan People's Party] government in AJK.

Barrister Sultan Mahmood criticised agitation politics of opposition and said at this stage when the freedom struggle in held Kashmir has entered final phase the polarisation among Pakistani political parties was a big shock for every Kashmiri. He asked Nawaz Sharif to announce strike to express solidarity with freedom fighters. He said Nawaz Sharif should not take revenge on people of Kashmir for his deprivation from the power.

The newly elected AJK prime minister, who also celebrated his 41st birthday on Friday [9 August], told the gathering amidst a thunder of applause that August 12 will be the last day of Sardar Sikandar Hayat in the office of president. Sultan said that he had requested President Sikandar Hayat to resign in the larger interest of Kashmir but he paid no heed.

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Barrister Sultan Mahmood said the opposition is free to hold protests and processions against his government but at least they should have little care for single agenda of freedom struggle in occupied Kashmir.

The AJK prime minister pledged that he would implement the party's election manifesto and will make AJK a model state. Paying rich tributes to PPP founder chairman Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Sultan vowed to complete his mission by ending poverty and unemployment from Kashmir.

Pakistan: No-Confidence Motion Against Azad Kashmir President Passed

BK1208091996 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Overseas Service in English 0800 GMT 12 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A no-confidence resolution against the ARK [Azad Jammu and Kashmir] president, Sardar Sikander Hayat Khan, was passed at the joint session of the Azad Kashmir legislative assembly and the Jammu and Kashmir council in Muzaffarabad today. The resolution was passed by 39 members belonging to People's Party, Azad Kashmir, and its allies, which shows more than two-third majority. The session was presided over by the speaker, Mr. Mumtaz Hussain Rathore.

Pakistan: Further on Ouster of Azad Kashmir President by Legislators

BK1208142196 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 12 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The president of Azad Jammu and Kashmir [AJK], Sardar Sikander Hayat Khan, has been voted out of office by the Azad Jammu and Kashmir legislative assembly and AJK council through a resolution of no confidence. The resolution was carried through a show of hands by 39 votes out of 55 members of the AJK legislative assembly and AJK council. The AJK minister for electricity, Khwaja Farooq, moved the resolution in a joint sitting of the legislative assembly and council especially convened for this purpose in Muzaffarabad this morning. Speaker Raja Mumtaz Hussain Rathore presided over the session. Sardar Sikander Hayat Khan was reelected president by the outgoing legislative assembly of AJK after its election schedule was announced.

Earlier, speaking on the resolution, AJK Prime Minister Barrister Sultan Mahmud Chaudhary said People's Party after securing two-third majority in the elections had tried to persuade Sardar Sikander Hayat Khan to resign from his office. He said Sardar Sikander Hayat Khan should have himself resigned from the office as his election was not according to the dictates of democracy and ethics. Some 15 members spoke in favor of the resolution and condemned the manner in which Sardar Sikander Hayat Khan was reelected as AJK president.

PTV correspondent Khalid Sargana reports from Muzzafarabad that today was the last day of constitutional five-year term of President Sardar Sikander Hayat Khan. Our representative says this is the second time in AJK history that a president has been ousted from his office through a vote of no confidence. In 1975, Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan was voted out. The speaker of the legislative assembly, Raja Mumtaz Hussain Rathore, will act as president of AJK in the interim period till the election of the new president.

Pakistan: 'Partial' Strike Observed Against Budget, Taxes

BK1008141496 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 10 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Strike called by traders against certain taxes and budgetary proposals was observed partially today. According to reports from major cities, including Karachi, Lahore, Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Peshawar, and Quetta, life remained normal. Big business centers kept their activities suspended, while small markets and shopping centers and other areas of trading activity, including shops, restaurants, and vendors carried out their normal business activity.

A PPI report from Lahore quoting the office-bearers of the Lahore Traders Association says the association has decided to act in accordance with their point of view. The traders association said they are fed up with the repeated strike calls causing serious financial hardships to them. According to PPI, the association further pointed out factories and business establishments owned by the leader of the opposition in Lahore were operative today without bothering about the strike call by their subsidiary organization. The traders association made it clear they would not become instruments in the hands of politically motivated organizations.

Meanwhile, public and private transport also remained operative in different parts of the country. Reports from Karachi further say university examinations were held today with 100 percent attendance of the candidates.

Pakistan: Peaceful Strike Halts Countrywide Business Activity

BK1208125496 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 11 Aug 96 pp 1, 10

[Report by Raja Zulfikar]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — The business community brought all trading activity to a near-

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complete halt in most parts of the country on Saturday [10 August] as it downed shutters to protest against the allegedly heavy taxes levied by the government..

Main commercial centers and business abodes were reported closed in all major cities of Pakistan as businessmen responded to the strike call enthusiastically with a shut-down throughout the four provinces.

No untoward incident came to light any where except Lahore where two motorcyclists fired at a couple of opened shops, one owned by a local PPP [Pakistan People's Party] leader, to force a closure. Glass doors were smashed and both the shops were heavily damaged but nobody was injured.

Supported by many opposition parties, the strike has been called by the Anjuman-e-Tajiran Punjab for two days. The Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry supported the trading community by keeping its offices closed.

Though there was almost a complete closure of all the main business centers and places of trading activity, vendors in some parts of the country did their business. Similarly, street and mohallah [local area] shops remained open in addition to medicine centers and chemists.

Traffic generally remained thin in all the main cities but official sources attributed this not to the strike but to the fact that Saturday is a government holiday.

The government disagreed that there was a complete strike in the country although it did concede partial strike and that too, only in some parts of the country.

Television reported normal activity in the country and a partial strike.

Pleased with the traders' response, the business community will remain on strike again on Sunday [11 August] after which it will decide the future line of action. Already, it has threatened an indefinite shut-down.

In Islamabad, trading activity was done as different associations had announced they would not be part of the strike. Rawalpindi, however, saw an impressive shutdown as the main trading centers were closed. In the afternoon, various shops were opened.

Reports arriving here from Karachi speak of a complete suspension of business as all the main markets, business centers and bazaars were closed. No business was done in any commercial area which virtually wore a deserted look.

Shops, markets and educational institutions were closed, attendance in commercial offices was very low, while transporters plied partly on the city's roads.

Paying heed to the strike call, citizens consumed the day as a gifted holiday and went out for domestic calls and recreational resorts. Law enforcement personnel were deployed at sensitive points and no major untoward incident was reported. However, three vehicles including two buses and a milk delivery van were set on fire while unidentified miscreants pelted stones on vehicles in different parts of the city during the strike called by the 14 parties opposition alliance.

Industrial areas also missed the usual humming of machines. Small and medium industries at Korangi, SITE [Sindh Industrial and Trading Estate], North Karachi and Federal B Area were also affected due to the strike as production either remained suspended or they could not meet the production target.

The strike call was given by fourteen opposition political parties, including PML [Pakistan Muslim League], MQM [Muhajir Qaumi Movement], ANP [Awami National Party], and Jamaat-e-Islami, which unanimously felt that the PPP government should go as it was incompetent to run the affairs of the country.

The opposition strike call was against what they called heavy taxation in the budget, corruption, victimization of opponents and other policies of the government. To add to the opposition parties' call, small traders and doctors community also observed a protest day on Saturday. Provincial and federal government offices were closed due to the weekly off, while 80 per cent of the restaurants remained closed. Fuel stations operated partly, while fruit and vegetable vendors were on the boom.

Karachi Transport Corporation claimed that despite the country wide strike it brought out its buses as usual and no incident of burning or any damage was reported from its seven depots situated in the five districts of the city.

Taxis, rickshaw and yellow cabs were not available frequently, while coaches, wagons and buses were also one third of their original strength.

In NWFP [North-West Frontier Province] also, small traders responded well to the strike call and generally, business activity remained largely affected. All main bazaars in Peshawar city and the cantonment were reported closed. Shopkeepers in the outskirts of the city, however, observed partial strike.

Reports from Abbottabad and Bannu said that a complete strike was observed. However, in Kohat, the strike was partial. All shops remained closed till 10 am there, but later shopkeepers started opening them up. A joint protest procession of traders and opposition parties was taken out in Kohat's wheat market which after passing

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through the main bazaar turned into a public meeting at Chowk Bannu bazaar.

Our Quetta correspondent adds: A complete strike was observed in the city on Saturday. All business centers, markets and bazaars remained closed throughout the day. Although traders and the opposition parties had not extended a call for wheel jam, yet the traffic was thin due to a total closure of businesses. The strike call was jointly extended by opposition parties including PML-N, JWP [Jamhoori Watan Party], JI [Jamaat-e-Islami], ANP [Awami National Party], JAH [Jamiat Ahle Hadith], JUP [Jamiat Ulemai Pakistan], TJP [Tehrik-i-Jafria Party], and Hazara Progressive Forum, while the Anjuman Tajiran Balochistan had also endorsed it. The activists of these parties went round the city and thanked the shopkeepers and businessmen for extending full support in their struggle against the government. However, no untoward incident was reported. According to the reports reaching here the strike was also observed in Zhob, Chaman, and Sibi.

Reports reaching here from Punjab suggest that the main business cities were completely closed in response to the strike call. Small shopkeepers and big traders alike joined the protest strike in Faisalabad. The city presented a deserted look as no socioeconomic activity took place. The city centre, including its eight bazaars, were also closed. Yarn and jewelry markets in the area were also closed.

In Multan, all the big trade centers, wholesale markets and even small shopkeepers closed down their businesses. Poultry farmers also announced to observe the strike against the levying of the general sales tax.

In Jhang, all the main shopping centers including Rail Bazaar, Shaheed Road and Kot road remained closed.

In Khanewal, however, about 75 per cent traders gave a positive response to the strike call. In Rahimyar Khan the strike was total.

Pakistan: 'Partial Strike' Observed for Second Day

BK1208012196 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Partial strike on the call of traders was observed in different parts of the country on the second day today. Main business centers remained closed; however, small business centers, shops and vendors were operating normally. A PPI [Pakistan Press International] report from Lahore says some shops and shopping centers which kept their shutters down yesterday started their business activities today. The agency said the business community this time was not ready to go on strike as they say strike is no solution of problems. They advocate holding negotiations with the government for redressal of their grievances. Another group, however, supports the strike as they say it is the only way to register protest with the government.

Pakistan: 'Show Cause' Order Issued Against Supreme Court Judge

BK1208070996 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 11 Aug 96 p 7

[Editorial: "SC Contempt Case"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The show cause issued by the Supreme Court (SC) against a sitting judge of the Federal Shariat Court (FSC), Mr Justice Shafi Mohammadi, on a charge of having committed contempt of court, is unprecedented. It is likely to become another milestone in Pakistan's chequered judicial history, at a time when the effects of the landmark judgment delivered by a full bench of the SC in what is known as the Judges' appointment case have still to be overcome.

The FSC judge has been accused of having committed contempt of the SC by passing adverse remarks against it in reference to its judgment in the mentioned case, in one of his judgments. The specific nature of his adverse remarks are not known as the divisional bench of the SC, which has issued the notice to the FSC judges, has also prohibited the publication in any form of paragraphs nos. 2 to 13 of Mr. Justice Shafi Mohammadi's judgment. While the SC has the right to bar the publication of the detailed portions, keeping in view the importance of the case it would have been better to make public the said paragraphs so that the nature of contempt could be understood. Otherwise it would be difficult to establish the act of contempt.

In fact, the SC had not obstructed the debate that had preceded and followed the judgment delivered by its full bench in the Judges' appointment case. This had helped to comprehend the role the superior courts were performing under the new trend of judicial activism. This spirit of making the judiciary more open should be maintained in this case also.

Moreover, this case is also likely to raise several contentious issues which will need to be resolved once the hearing begins. It will have to be decided to what extent can a judge of an equal status express views on a judgment that are contrary to it. Few judgments of a critical nature have been unanimous, as inevitably dissenting views have been expressed. Even the present Chief Justice of the SC, Mr. Justice Sajjad Ali Shah, had disagreed with the majority judgment in the 1993 appeal of Nawaz Sharif against his dismissal. This had given reasons to believe that superior courts' judgments,

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while being immune to public comment, were open to criticism by the judges of the same courts.

In this context, the FSC judge's remarks might be seen in the same spirit, unless the action implies the inferiority of the court to which the judge belongs. Mr. Justice Shafi Mohammadi, in commenting on the case against him, "welcomed" the SC order and contended that the time had come for the people to decide whether the Shariat Court was above the Supreme Court, under the Supreme Court or totally independent of its working.

Wisdom suggests that issues of this nature between courts of similar status should best be resolved within the mechanism that allows interaction among the courts, rather than to seek relief through the legal system. In Mr. Justice Shafi Mohammadi's case, it is quite possible that it would require further interpretations of the Constitution of a far-reaching nature before the case is decided.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: Article on UNP's Options on Autonomy Proposals

BK1208062796 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 11 Aug 96

[Article by Ram Manikkalingam: "Nationalism or Liberalism?" — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sri Lanka's main Opposition party — the United National Party [UNP] — is in a quandary. If it opposes President Chandrika Kumaratunga's autonomy proposals, it risks permanently losing minority support and the possibility of returning to power soon. If it supports these proposals, it risks relegating itself to the margins of Sri Lankan politics by cementing a strong Alliance (PA) and the minority political parties.

The nationalist wing in the UNP has been advancing the former course, while the liberal wing the latter. Both these positions are animated by the electoral imperatives of achieving political power in a country where Sinhala Buddhists form 70 percent of the population.

The nationalist wing sees electoral politics as primarily a Sinhala game. Get the Sinhala vote and come to power. The 'whole problem' in its view 'is that the Sinhala people are divided between two political parties.' This has enabled the minorities to influence unduly the outcome of Sri Lankan politics. This wing of the UNP strongly believes that appealing to Sinhala sentiments alone will get the party back to power.

The liberal wing disagrees. It views electoral politics as a multi-ethnic game. Though Sinhalese are in the majority, their vote has traditionally been divided between the two dominant political parties — the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) of Kumaratunga and the United National Party. Therefore, the party that comes to power will be the one that is capable of attracting the greatest minority vote.

This sentiment is expressed in a recent report on national integration prepared under the chairmanship of UNP member of Parliament Tyronne Fernando. The report is an attempt to deal with the dual debacle of the UNP's defeat in the parliamentary and presidential elections of 1994. Having identified the loss of the minority vote as a key factor in its defeat, the report recommends that the UNP remedy this. The basic thrust is a political strategy to win back minority support.

This strategy is fairly straightforward: address minority concerns — culture, religion, fundamental rights, land, reconstruction, development and education; build a credible minority UNP leadership among the Indian Tamils, Sri Lankan Tamils, and the Muslims; maintain contacts with minority political parties; Publish UNP communications in all three languages; work with organisations — like the Church — that promote 'national integration' because they include members from both communities; support a just and fair solution to the North/East problem.

While it is difficult to disagree with the strategy — despite its vagueness on the nature of the political solution — the political analysis on which it is based is flawed. The report identifies 1994 as a watershed in the loss of the minority vote-bank for the UNP. But this loss occurred much earlier and much more rapidly. As far as the Tamils were concerned, this shift began in 1978, with the passage of the Prevention of Terrorism Act, and was completed in 1982, with the burning of the Jaffna library. July 1983 simply confirmed to the Tamils that they were right in having abandoned the UNP. The problem, however, was that Tamils living outside the Northeast or the hill country had no one else to vote for.

The SLFP did not erode the UNP minority vote in 1994. Rather, the SLFP succeeded in getting the minority vote in 1994 that the UNP had lost in 1983. What was unusual was not the UNP loss, but the SLFP gain. For the first time ever, the SLFP viewed with trepidation as a Sinhala Buddhist party by the minorities, obtained real minority support. The key factor here was not that the SLFP has shifted its political position as a party but that its new leader — Chandrika — fearlessly advocated a peaceful solution to the war.

Why did the Tamils look upon the SLFP with suspicion and vote for the UNP prior to 1981? The simplistic answer — provided by Sinhala nationalists — is that the

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Tamils as a privileged minority under colonialism, felt more comfortable with the anglicised UNP than with the SLFP. There may be an element of truth to this answer as far as the Tamil elite were concerned, but it does not explain the anti-SLFP position of the ordinary Tamil person. The answer has to do with the dynamics of democracy in Sri Lanka.

The UNP has traditionally been the party of liberal individualism in Sri Lanka. It has generally advocated a minimalist approach to the role of the state. This position, when translated into policy, has meant a commitment to diminish state ownership and the role of the state in the economy — privatisation and deregulation. This has also meant a smaller and less powerful role for the state in other aspects of the polity. The SLFP on the other hand, came to power with the promise to use the state to change the culture of the polity. Sri Lanka is an ethnically polarised society where state power has invariably oscillated between two segments of the majority Sinhala community.

It is understandable then that the Tamil minority that has suffered at the hands of a Sinhala-dominated state would support a party that limited the state's role. Interestingly Dr. Mick Moore, a leading scholar on Sri Lanka, identifies the opposite dynamic — the desire for an expanded role of the state — as the basis for the traditional alliance between the SLFP and the Left (the Lanka Equal Society Party/Communist Party) in Sri Lankan politics. He argues that despite their opposition to Sinhala nationalism, the parliamentary Left supported the SLFP because of the SLFP's willingness to accept a greater role for the state in the economy a traditional Left position.

However the ideological cultural differences between the UNP and the SLFP that attracted the Tamil vote to the UNP became less and less relevant to the minorities after the UNP came to power in 1977. The UNP centralisation of power under the second republican constitution, its crony capitalism, its nepotism and its resort to thuggery alienated the minorities, especially the Tamils. The Tamils wanted power to be devolved, they disliked crony capitalism (the Sinhala capitalists were generally better at being cronies with the Sinhala leaders) they could not benefit from nepotism and they feared political thuggery (because they had been subjected to it).

A UNP Cabinet Minister like Cyril Mathew epitomised the worst fears of the minorities by combining all of these negative factors. He exercised political power while openly practising anti-Tamil politics. He published pamphlets attacking the minorities and baiting Tamil parliamentarians. He is also considered one of the key individuals responsible for setting the stage for the anti-Tamil riots of 1983. What particularly alienated the Tamils was that the UNP appeared to be tolerating if not condoning, the behaviour of the likes of Cyril Mathew. By 1983, the UNP had transformed itself in minority eyes from the party of the liberal Dudley Senanayake to that of the chauvinist Cyril Mathew.

Today's nationalists in the UNP implicitly appeal to this anti-Tamil UNP political tradition in their charge against the proposals. The political logic of their argument for a Sinhala UNP can only conclude with the call for an alliance with Sinhala extremists against any concessions to the Tamils. This alliance will be the mirror image of the alliance that opposed the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord of 1987. Instead of the SLFP, we will see the UNP align with the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) and other Sinhala extremists. However such an alliance will have very limited political clout. The most it will be is a spoiler, precluding the possibility of effecting radical constitutional reform and further alienating the minorities from the UNP.

If the nationalists in the UNP suffer from a lack of political imagination, their liberal counterparts suffer from a lack of political conviction. Having identified minority flights as their main malaise, they are not prepared to follow their analysis to its political conclusion evolving an independent political strategy to win back the minorities. They will have to evolve a more imaginative strategy than the PA that will express minority political concerns and thus preclude the possibility of a permanent alliance between the minorities and the PA. This would require going one step ahead of the PA with regard to both the devolution proposals and the war. A liberal UNP strategy should advocate greater, not lesser, devolution than envisaged in the current proposals, while expressing concern about or even opposing the war.

In the short term, this approach will not weaken the PA Government, nor will it endear the UNP to the Sinhala nationalists. However, it will situate the UNP in an ideal position to return to power by exploiting any potential differences between the PA and the minority parties after the devolution proposals have been constitutionalised. But this is unlikely to occur. Charting a course independent of Sinhala nationalists, on the one hand, and the ruling PA on the other, requires political imagination and leadership. Both of which the UNP sadly lacks. August proposals remain, with one change. In case the Central Government requires land in a Region for a subject in the Reserved or National List, it can be acquired after consulting the Regional administration. The Regional Government will have to comply.

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State land within a region will, however, be vested with the region, barring any specific requirement of the Central Government. "The Regional administration shall be entitled to exercise rights in or over such land, including land tenure, transfer or alienation of land, land use, land settlement and improvement in accordance with applicable laws. Provided that priority in future land settlement shall be accorded first to persons of the district and then to persons of the region."

The subject of law and order will be divided between the centre and the regions with the proposed creation of a National Police Commissioner and a Regional Police Commissioner.

Interestingly, the list of crimes to be investigated by the national police is almost identical to that contained in the 13th amendment to the 1978 Constitution, a consequence of the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord of 1987. Crimes relating to national security, offenses pertaining to the security forces and important central offices under the Constitution, offenses pertaining to any subject under the Reserved List and international crimes will be investigated by the national police. Offenses not specifically in the domain of the national police will be probed by the regional police. Crimes such as murder, rape, robbery and sundry offenses will be within the jurisdiction of the Regional Police Commissioner.

As in the 13th amendment, the Government will set up a finance commission to deal with the issue of revenue sharing. Specific excise duties betting taxes, motor vehicle licence fees, stamp duties on immovable property and vehicle transfers, court fines, stamp duties on court documents, land revenue and taxes on mineral rights can be collected by the regional administrations.

Justice Minister Prof. G.L. Peiris told a press conference on January 17 that informal discussions on the legal draft would be held with political parties since the Select Committee could not meet till February 9 as Parliament had been prorogued until then.

Peiris said devolution could take place subject to maintenance of the unity and sovereignty of the Republic. He did not feel the Government had compromised the rights of the minorities by giving primacy of place to Buddhism in the legal draft. According to him, nothing relating to the national flag, anthem, and Buddhism had been changed from the 1978 Constitution.

He said the Government had taken a conscious decision to allow a public debate on the August proposals. Academics, trade unionists and professionals had participated in the vigorous debate, he maintained. The changes had been made according to the framework spelt out earlier, but the main features, he stressed, remained the same.

Asked if there was a time-frame for completing the examination of the devolution proposals, Peiris said it was not possible to fix a schedule but the government was keen on completing the process quickly.

But the process is far from easy. If Sinhala concerns have been addressed in the legal draft, the Tamil demand for a merged North-East remains. Recently, discussions among the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), the People's Liberation Organisation for Tamil Eelam (PLOTE), the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO) and the Eelam Revolutionary Organisation (EROS) have concluded that a 'unified politico-administrative entity for the permanently merged North-East region' is a must even while incorporating institutional arrangements within the larger framework of the North-East Region for the Muslim people ensuring their cultural identity and security.'

The attitude of the Opposition United National Party (UNP) will be crucial to the whole exercise aimed at devolving powers. The party which had not expressed any opinion on the August proposals, had preferred to wait for the legal draft.

Deft negotiations and political maturity are called for if the legal draft is to sail through the Select Committee, and then win a two-thirds majority support in Parliament and approval in a referendum.

Sri Lanka: Troops Consolidate Defenses in 'Newly Captured' Areas

BK1208143196 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 12 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Troops of Operation Sathjaya continue to consolidate their defenses in the newly captured areas. Security force snipers confirmed they shot and killed four terrorists in the area ahead of the defended area. The operation is continuing. The headquarters says that 33 civilians and four policemen received minor injuries when the terrorists exploded a Claymore mine at the (Mangam) kovil [temple] in the Batticaloa town yesterday. They were engaged in religious activities at the kovil during the incident. The injured were evacuated to the Batticaloa Hospital.

A security force route picket party was attacked by a group of terrorists between Otagama and Migaswewa in the Trincomalee District. The troops retaliated repulsing the attack. One soldier was killed and one wounded. The casualties were admitted to the Huratgama Hospital. In another incident at Puttur in Trincomalee, a security

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forces vehicle was caught up in a terrorist pressure mine explosion. The vehicle was on its way from Kallar to Puttur. Four soldiers were wounded and admitted to the Trincomalee Hospital.

In the Jaffna town, the terrorists threw hand grenades at a security forces bunker yesterday killing one soldier. At Tondamannar, the troops fired at two terrorists killing one and injuring the other. The body of one terrorist was recovered later.

Navy gunboats attacked a flotilla of Tiger terrorist boats off Mullaittivu, while ground troops elsewhere engaged in fierce fighting in the North and the East. At least one big terrorist boat was sunk killing six of the Sea Tigers and eight other LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] craft were damaged during the midnight daring sea battle on Friday [9 August]. The operational headquarters says that two sailors were wounded during the exchange of fire off the island's Mullaittivu coast. Military sources confirmed intense Tiger cadre attacks on soldiers. The advancing troops get the support of artillery, helicopter gunships, and ground attacks [word indistinct]. Troops of Operation Sathjaya are moving cautiously because of mines and booby traps set along approaches to the [word indistinct]. They continue to consolidate defenses in the newly captured areas. Military Spokesman Brigadier Sarath Munasinghe said that the operation has been launched to destroy Tiger strongholds and to draw and kill as many terrorists as possible. The operation continues.

Sri Lanka: LTTE Denies Government Troops in Kilinochchi

BK1208061496 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in English 10 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Contrary to the Sri Lankan Government recent claims that its armed forces have reached the outskirts of the Tamil town of Kilinochchi, the Sri Lankan troops are still pinned down in Paranthan unable to march to Kilinochchi. For the past 6 days the Sri Lankan military has been making a desperate bid to break out of Paranthan in an attempt to occupy more Tamil homeland by capturing Kilinochchi and its suburbs in Vanni. The effective resistance that has been put up by the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] freedom fighters have thwarted all attempts by the government forces to invade the Tamil homeland.

The Sri Lankan Government has violated the human rights of the Tamil people by denying food and medicine for the people. As part of the military strategy of its war, the Sri Lankan military authorities have created a famine in the area by blocking food and medicine for the Tamil people living in Vanni mainland. 120 lorries taking food, medicine and other essential supplies for daily life have been presently blocked by the Sri Lankan military authorities at Vavuniya and not permitted to enter the Vanni mainland where 500,000 to 600,000 Tamils are living.

The latest military aggression is the continuation of the long history of oppression by the successive Sinhala governments since 1948 on Tamils who constitute a Nation of people. The genocidal attempts to destroy Tamils' national identity and their democratic rights have cost the lives of over 50,000 Tamils.

Sri Lanka: LTTE Reports Relief Situation in Kilinochchi

BK1308070396 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in English 12 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

GOVERNMENT AGENT OF KILINOCHCHI APPEALS FOR HELP

The Government agent of Kilinochchi has appealed to Non-governmental relief agencies to take up responsibility for food and water distribution to the people living in Vanni where the Sri Lankan military authorities have created a famine by blocking food and medicine for the Tamil people who live in the area. Ironically, the International and Local non-governmental organisations including International Committee of Red Cross, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and MSF [Medicins Sans Frontieres] have themselves been displaced after the present Sri Lankan military offensive on Kilinochchi and are constrained by the Sri Lankan government's suspension of food and medical supplies to the Tamil community.

120 lorries taking food, medicine and other essential supplies for daily life have been presently blocked by the Sri Lankan military authorities at Vavuniya and not permitted to enter the Vanni mainland where 500,000 to 600,000 Tamils are living. Rice and Wheat run out in Vanni. Reports have reached that the people in Vanni have no rice or wheat for daily consumption in the areas of Thunnukai, Mallavi, Puthuvedduvan, Pannikan Kulam, Palainagar and Vinayakapuram. This is the full text of the situation report on Kilinochchi district made by Government Agent of Kilinochchi S. Thillanadarajah. His office has made available the copies to the public.

SITUATION IN KILINOCHCHI DISTRICT ON 07-08-1996

Permanent Population:

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Permanent population confined to three AGA divisions of Karachchi, Kandawalai and Poonakary is about 165,000. Pallai division is now attached to Jaffna district.

Displaced population:

About 3,500 families comprising 13,500 persons have been living in 19 welfare centres in Kilinochchi district since 1990. About 6,400 families consisting of 33,000 persons have been living with friends and relatives since the same date as above.

The Leap Forward, Riverasa 01, 02, and 03 operations brought in additional displaced population of about 200,000 into this district.

The Sath Jeya operation confined to Kilinochchi district has caused a mass displacement of about 155,000 persons from Karachchi AGA [Assistant Government Agent] division the centre of concentration of population, state administration of all sectors, banking, commercial activities etc. to the remote interior and far-away nook and corners of the same AGA division Karachchi. About 5,000 persons moved into AGA division Poonakary. About 2000 persons from Paranthan, Murasumoddai, Uriyan, Korakkankaddu etc. moved into places of further destination within same Kandawalai AGA division.

The population is still in mass displacement and motion since the activities of the conflicting parties are in process and escalation. The areas are inaccessible and completely devoid of communication of any sort.

Therefore it is not possible to ascertain and determine the correct position.

Food items:

The CGES [Commissioner General of Essential Services] essential relief items stock is nil and the displaced community has not received any items for sustenance since May 1996. Kilinochchi district has not received any commodity since 17-07-1996. According to the information accrued, a few items are only available at the rural outlets of the MPCSs [expansion unknown]. The position of this acute scarcity, it is feared, will no doubt drive the population into desperate plight of hunger and starvation if no immediate positive action is resorted to. Net results of malnutrition among vulnerable percentage of population. i.e. infants, children, mothers in need etc. need not be emphasised.

Shelter:

The entire interior forestry with trees of broader girth and extensive shade has become the shelters of the unfortunate civilians with many members ranging from infants to senile persons beyond the age of even 75 years. These are in fact bordering the internal cart tracks, and foot-paths through which mobility is fast creating a mass smoke of dust and dirt that these persons absorb into their physical system. During the day time, due to extreme heat and dust, they suffer. During the nights, the whole areas in this jungle are seen with series of dotted gloomy lights at which time they cook their available meals that they gathered from benefactors and others.

Portable (drinking) water is not available to them. Unclean water is gathered in utensils that they salvaged during their sad journey. Water is collected from far-away spots and in the nearby drying up tanks and kept exposed to various elements. Nature provides water usually and it has also failed to add up difficulties to the citizens.

Aolution is carried out in roadsides with covered sarees as fences. Forestry is infested with poisonous reptiles and other creatures.

The whole position is totally hazardous to health and mental equilibrium.

State institutions:

Due to heavy shelling and aerial bombardments in the area of domicile of functioning state institutions, the state staff has become displaced to their safety and security. However few institutions have shifted on ad hoc system in that:

01. district hospital, Kilinochchi to Akkarayan and Mallavi in parts.
02. The Kachcheri, Kilinochchi to Skandapuram
03. The peoples bank, Kilinochchi to Akkarayan Kulam
04. The bank of Ceylon, Kilinochchi to Mankulam
05. The national saving bank, Kilinochchi to Skandapuram
06. The D.S/AGA Karachchi to Skanthapuram

NGOs [Nongovernmental Organizations] and relief activities

All international NGOs have left the Kilinochchi district. However PORUT [as received—expansion unknown] that already had their functioning in rural area of Kandapuram is active within their available means and resources.

General:

The shellings and aerial bombardments are continuing. The speculation counts 25 deaths and more than 105 injured victims. Actual cases cannot be correctly ascertained in the present context of escalation of crisis.

Requirement:

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01. Shelters: Jungle poles with cadjans, plastic sheets, materials for construction of Lavatories, water bowsers, storage tanks, food items inclusive of milk foods.

Recommendation:

01. Provisions of the above relief to the displaced community be expedited.
02. Senior staff officers and the members of supporting staff and business community left their domiciles with what they could gather as minimum. They should be provided with-

a. Dry rations etc.
b. Non food items of shelter materials, kitchen utensils, Lanterns, clothing etc.
c. State staff be provided with 03 months distress advance free of interest recoverable in 36 instalments

[signed] S. Thillanadarajah Govt. Agent and district Secretary Kilinochchi district

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